



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

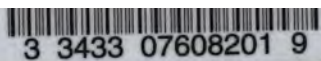
Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

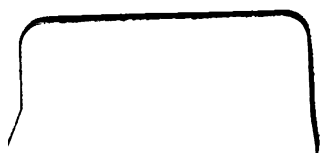
- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



3 3433 07608201 9



6

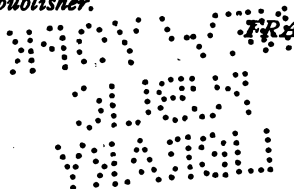
NEW YORK
PUBLIC
LIBRARY

(McDevitt
N.E.

xywz
ab
vw

*The retail price of this book is twenty five cents.
This is the price at which it should be bought from book-
sellers; the price at which it can be bought direct from
the publisher.*

FRANK A. MUNSEY.

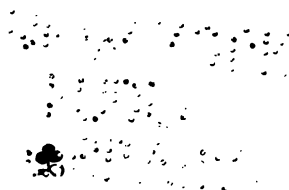


IN THE REIGN OF BORIS

A TALE OF CARPATHIA

BY

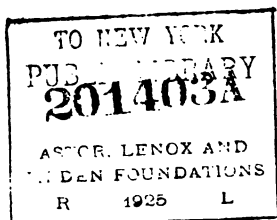
ROBERT McDONALD



NEW YORK
FRANK A. MUNSEY

—
1897

Y.S.



COPYRIGHT, 1897
BY
FRANK A. MUNSEY



IN THE REIGN OF BORIS.

I.

THE New York had given her last signal, and was just about to slip backward from her dock and give herself into the hands of the officious little tug which was waiting to turn her into the stream, when a young man with a dress suit case in one hand and a bag in the other, came tearing his way down the pier shed. He fairly floored a fat old gentleman who was mopping his forehead and shouting good by to a loving family on deck, gave a leap and gained the vessel's rail just as the gangplank fell.

"That was a close shave, young man," an official said sternly. "You had better learn to be on time."

"Great Scott! What do you call being on time?" the young man replied. He put his

traps on the deck, and took out his watch. "I have had just forty five minutes since they told me to start. I'd like to see you pack for Europe and get here from Thirty Third Street in any less time."

He pushed his cap back from his damp forehead, and began to laugh. Then he took the cap off and looked at it and laughed again. It was a trifle large for his blond head, and bore the insignia of the New York Yacht Club. It was altogether a likable face that was exhibited by its removal. The mouth and chin had been firmly set, and the thick eyebrows drawn close together over the nose during the race, but now that it was over, and won, the features were relaxed in relief.

The passengers who stood about looked at him with interest and sympathy; and presently one, a dark, handsome man of about thirty, who moved with a deliberation which his glancing eyes belied, came up and held out his hand.

"Mr. Beverly, how do you do?"

Beverly met the thin, smooth, dark palm cordially.

"Good morning, Count Lubona. I did not know I was to have you for a fellow passenger. I hadn't much time to study up the passenger list."

Lubona looked inquiringly at the bag and dress suit case.

"Oh, there is something in them; linen—clothes—I don't know what. I think they mostly belong to Hardin, particularly the shirts. His laundry had just come home, and was lying on a chair; but we are about of a size," he concluded, with relief.

"Are you in the habit of going about the world shot out of a cannon, as it were?"

"Count Lubona," Beverly said solemnly, "I am a newspaper man, and I go anywhere on earth where I am sent. I went to bed at two o'clock this morning, tired out, and now I am on my way——"

"Where?" Lubona asked.

They had both seated themselves, and Beverly fanned himself with the cap.

"I am sure I do not know. I am under sealed orders. There was no time for me to

talk anything over. They sent me a package to look at, and I suppose I shall find a cable on the other side, but my explicit directions were to get on this ship."

"Every room is engaged. What are you going to do?"

"I haven't the least idea. Perhaps the *Herald* has made some arrangement. Something will turn up, but I must go and see what it is."

He gathered up his traps, and made his way through the ship toward the purser. Everybody looked at him as he went along, his sensational entry having made him one of the spots upon which idle curiosity will center for a time. He found a very angry man when the purser was finally reached.

"The impudence of these newspapers is amazing," that official said. "We have no place for you. You will have to go back on the pilot boat."

"They seem to have some pretty good sofas scattered about," Mr. Beverly said suavely. "I've slept in worse places; or there is the

steerage. Travel is doubtless light in the steerage."

"You know confoundedly well that we can't afford to treat you badly, and get roasted by your paper year in and year out."

"I know that," Beverly sweetly agreed.

"We'd have an accident every trip for the next forty years, according to your account."

"Oh, no, not so bad as that. Mr. Wesser will be dead by that time, and you know his son, who is at college, is going to make a 'clean sheet,' when he comes into power;" and Mr. Beverly smiled.

"Say, will you go into a room with another man if he will take you?"

"If he is a pleasant person, why not?"

"I'll see what can be done for you, but it's an imposition"—and the purser grumbled as he started away. At the door he almost ran into Lubona, who stood aside politely.

"I came down to see how you were getting on," he smiled at Beverly. "If you have no stateroom, I shall be very happy to share mine with you."

Beverly had a habit of mind which had helped him to become what he was. He was quick to see a proposition from every point of view. He was not naturally suspicious, but rather given to caution, and ready to defend himself. He had met Lubona casually in New York and Washington during the past year. Nobody knew much about the count, though he was said by the society reporters to be seeking an heiress. If he were, he evidently had not found her. Beverly had come into contact with him while writing up the history of the efforts of a band of politicians to get the A. M. and C. bill through the House and Senate, and it had appeared to him that Lubona was something more than a society butterfly. He might be rich, or he might be poor. He might want his company in his stateroom because he needed to share expenses—or because he thought a newspaper man might some day be of value. At any rate, Beverly was glad to have part of the room, and he said so.

The two men went in together, and Lubona sat in dignified silence while Beverly arranged

his possessions about the room, and talked. He finally took a heavy manilla envelope from his pocket, and with an "Excuse me while I discover where I am going," broke the seal, and began to read the hastily scribbled notes. As his eyes traveled down the sheets, torn from a notebook, they dilated, and then the brows drew themselves together over his nose very much as they had done as he ran his race for the steamer, and a long breath made a whistle through his lips.

He read the notes two or three times, and then without a word he put them back into the envelope and slipped it into his pocket.

"Want to go on deck? We must be about down to the goddess. She always reminds me of a fine, healthy mother lighting her children up to bed. There may be poetry in that idea, but I do not believe it is exactly the one her creator intended."

Lubona had followed him, Beverly stopping to put a band of paper inside the lining of the yachting cap, so that it made a more presentable fit.

"The statue impresses one who has never had too much liberty," the foreigner said quietly.

Beverley turned and looked at him.

"Russian, I suppose," he said to himself. "Probably feels tyranny in the regular George Kennan fashion. Do you know any of the passengers?" he asked aloud. "Suppose we look over the list, and see where we are going to sit at the table, and all that sort of thing. Everything depends upon how agreeably we are placed. The last time over I was next to a lady reformer who lectured upon the corruption of the press three times a day. I shouldn't like that to happen again."

Beverly found the passenger list, and went rapidly over it. Lubona seemed to take no interest in it, but spent his time looking at a little girl whose nurse was showing her the beauties of the ship. Many of the names were known to the newspaper man. It was just the season for the annual flitting across the seas, and every cabin was crammed not only with the fashionable New Yorkers running over for

the London season, but with the flotsam and jetsam from the social life of Europe that had been wintering in America. There were several opera singers who were going for short stays in Paris and Vienna, or in some quiet country place, before they made their appearance at Covent Garden in London. But Beverly ran all of these by without heed, and fastened his eyes on one name. Then he went up and down over the list again, as though he were searching for some connecting link between that and himself; but he found nothing, and the result did not seem to disappoint him.

As he put the card down, Lubona took it up, adjusting an eyeglass in his eye with an effect that made the younger man smile. Lubona looked like the pictures of those stiff white petticoated Albanians and Montenegrins which Canton Woodville used to send home when there were border wars in the fighting east. He was a Carpathian, but he seldom took the trouble to name his nationality, as he found that few people had any idea where his

country dotted the map of Europe, and feared to show their ignorance.

"Mr. and Mrs. L. Harrod Peyton," he read, and then musingly, "a beautiful American;" and so on down the list. Almost everybody came in for some comment. Sometimes he asked Beverly for information, and the list was so entirely made up of well known names that the newspaper man could almost always give it.

"John Marr," he read out finally. "Is that one of your millionaires or politicians?"

"That is a man you ought to know better than I," Beverly said carelessly. "He spends most of his time over in your part of the world. He is said to have mines, or railroads, or concessions, or something of that sort; to be a sort of second Baron Hirsch without his philanthropic schemes. I believe he is a German who came to America in the steerage when he was a baby, and made money in Montana or somewhere."

"Didn't I meet his daughter in Washington, at a dinner party?"

"Possibly," Beverly said, as if the subject did not interest him in the least.

"I do not see her name on the list here."

"Don't you?" with greater indifference.

"A beautiful girl, if I remember rightly."

"You seem to admire American girls, count," Beverly laughed. "That is about the tenth on this list whom I have heard you call beautiful."

"But she is not on the list."

They had walked up on deck, and Beverly was looking for an unoccupied steamer chair. As he left Lubona the smile on his face widened.

"I wonder if he thinks I am a fool," he said to himself. "He wanted me to point out that the 'Miss Moor' on that list was a misprint for 'Marr.' That little affectation tells what he is doing here—following the heiress! That is probably what brought him out of his own country, in the first place. The insolence of these foreigners!" And with the cocksureness of youth Mr. James Beverly, star reporter and all around journalist, temporarily settled an

important question which was going to have something to say to his own movements before it was settled for good.

Beverly's hunt for a chair was not successful, but he ran across two or three acquaintances. He was a representative journalist of the young men's generation. He had graduated from one of the best colleges in the country a few years before, spending the last year or two with his eyes steadily fixed upon Park Row in New York as the ultimate end of his mental journeyings. He had not edited the college magazine, because nobody thought of asking him to do so. He was a crack athlete, and an all around good fellow who never heard the word "literary" associated with himself. But in the editorial rooms of the *Herald* they already knew his name. None of his contributions was signed, and he was content to know that his pen was gaining facility day by day. He made no secret of the hope that he would be asked to take a position on the paper when he had received his degree, and the managing editor appeared

to be ready to hold out the bottom rung of the ladder.

For a few months after he took his place in the *Herald* office, Beverly had seen his work cut, slashed, crowded out by the last pertness of the last girl from below Mason and Dixon's line whose soft R's had taken the managing editor's ear for an hour; but he had stuck it out. He trained his eye to see, his understanding to proclaim first causes, and his pen to write decent, readable English without any attempt at eccentricity of style. Before the managing editor himself realized it, Beverly saw that he was looked upon as the always reliable man, whose story was sure to need no apologies the next day. When that came about, he knew that his feet were planted for good and all in the ways of journalism—thorny, rocky ways, but after all leading through the highways of the world.

A month before, Cresson, the managing editor, had said, as he let the corners of his dry lips twist over a lucid report of the doings of a Washington committee, "If there is a war,

we have a man in this office who is going to come out of it with a Phil Sheridan captaincy or a bloody grave, and the first letter of his name is B."

There was no new war cloud on the smoky sky of Europe, but evidently something was on hand for the man who owned that name. New York had taken kindly to Beverly as a self respecting young fellow who knew his own business and attended to it. Honest business men and politicians felt relieved when an interview was put into his hands, and then forgot all about him until the next time. It was only six months before that he had made himself something of a social lion by writing a novelette which ran through a popular magazine for a few months, and then came out as the book of the hour. So when he appeared on the deck of the most fashionable steamer of the spring, he found plenty of eyes to follow him. The curious who had seen his entry had learned his name by this time, and were whispering it to others.

"Going yachting?" a slightly sarcastic

voice asked, and Beverly looked around to see a languid young man lying cross legged in a steamer chair.

"Hello, Marsh! I assure you I'm thankful to have any head covering at all. Unfortunately I am not one of the *Van Bibber* young men who keep a collection of hats. I have just two in commission. Last night I dressed at the club, and put on a silk hat. This morning I found that by some mistake I had a choice between that and this yachting cap of Hardin's. I took this. Now I am traveling under false pretenses. Here is Hardin's name inside;" and he held it up.

They had steamed pretty well down the bay by this time, and a puff of wind came over the water and blew the lightly held bit of cloth and braid out of Beverly's hand, and sent it bowling along the deck. He started after it, but there were dowagers in the way, and the baby from down stairs had to be lifted aside. When he reached the cap at last, he found it in the hands of a girl. Beverly could see her long before he reached her. She had picked

the cap up from the deck, and he saw that she was looking at it inside and outside.

Beverly found himself unconsciously forming in his brain the words by which he would explain that the name and the club did not belong to him. But as he came nearer he looked beyond the girlish figure, and saw a tall, middle aged man, wrapped in a steamer rug, reclining in a long chair. He turned his face toward Beverly with what appeared to be a habitual look of inquiry. It was an expression which the young man knew. He was a Jewish looking person, thin and tall, and gray with a grimness of stone. The sight of him checked the words which were half out. Beverly took the cap, which was held out to him, with a word of thanks, and sauntered on. The wind was coming in his direction, and he heard the young girl say very distinctly,

"His name is Reginald Hardin, and he belongs to the New York Yacht Club."

"It is a name I have heard. I knew his father, a good many years ago," the man's voice answered.

II.

BEVERLY had taken a fancy into his head, and when a man does that he is pretty sure to cut situations to fit it. It was so seldom that he could allow his mind to run in the pleasant paths of fancy, except when he proposed to make literature—and incidentally money—of it, that he enjoyed it almost as much as a city man would enjoy a stroll through green fields. When he gets there, the city man is given to leaving even the faint guidance of the cowpaths, and striking for the middle of the clover. Beverly had so thoroughly made up his mind that Lubona had fastened his affections upon Miss Marr, or her American fortune, that he was ready to weave all sorts of romances concerning them. He had never seen her before, but the instant he saw her father he knew that it must be she; and he had mentally commended Lubona's good taste.

She sat some distance from him at dinner, and some stiffness or reserve upon the part of her father seemed to isolate them from all their neighbors. Lubona was also far away, and Beverly sat at the table with Marsh. He was not a vain young man, but in the past few months he had for one reason and another become so well known in New York that he was constantly being pointed out as one of the minor sights of the town, and unconsciously he found himself looking in Miss Marr's direction to see if any one was telling her that he was not Reginald Hardin. But she spoke to nobody, and seemed to carry an intention of maintaining her reserve.

Once or twice he caught her eye, and looked away consciously. She was such a remarkably pretty girl, after the splendid, goddess-like type, that it was a pleasure to look at her. She had brought her red gold hair up to the top of her head, where it made a fine contrast to her white forehead and dark eyes. There was a strain of poetry in Beverly, and he found himself thinking that the fine, clean

arch of her thin, dark eyebrows was like a melody. Her neck was round and white, and she had put on a little waist which let its whiteness show above a gathered frill of lace. Certainly Lubona had shown good taste, but the Carpathian count must have audacity to think that that girl would look at him. She was probably too good an American to do anything of the sort, Beverly thought.

After dinner he went up on deck, declining an invitation from Marsh to come into the smoking room and play cards. The air was chill, and a heavy sea was rolling, so that there were few people visible. Electric lights dotted the whole place, leaving hardly a corner for the dusk to gather. Beverly buttoned his coat about him, and walked up and down for a few minutes. He wanted to think, to get his ideas marshaled. There were complications in his situation.

There were plenty of steamer chairs now. He took one, and pushed it into a corner which had been left dim; and pulling Hardin's cap over his eyes, he sat down to think. The

heaving seas looked dark, and for an instant Beverly lost his self poise and felt helpless. His enterprise seemed a wild goose chase ; but then hunting wild geese was most distinctly a sport. He was trying to think out the reason for his mission. The information for it must have come from somewhere, and the sender must have a motive. He wondered if it were as exclusive as the great Mr. Wesser seemed to think. He would probably find an Englishman already on the spot.

When a man loses himself in his own thoughts, the actions of others are likely to pass by unnoticed. For three or four minutes a couple had been walking up and down on the deck, talking earnestly. The woman was very tall, and her head was well muffled in lace. The man had fur on the collar of his coat. As the electric light brought out these two characteristics, Beverly classed them as belonging to the opera singers—some mimic *Romeo* and *Juliet* perhaps, making the story real for the moment. They seemed to be in earnest conversation, and Beverly gazed at them with the

interest which everybody permits himself to feel when looking at public characters.

A climax in their talk appeared to have been reached as they neared Beverly for about the tenth time, for they stopped and faced each other. They were directly under the light, and to his surprise he saw that it was Lubona and Miss Marr. He gave a little whistle of surprise which almost betrayed him; and then how Beverly did pat himself as a past master of perspicacity!

"It was intuition," he said approvingly. "Why, it is a full plot for a drama. Cruel father! Noble lover! Wealth on one hand, and supposedly poverty on the other! Secret meetings, and all the rest of it."

They walked on, but they had taken a line which brought them so near to Beverly that now and then he could hear a word. He would not allow himself to listen, and he was feeling about under his coat for a cigar and a match, that he might make his presence known, when he was arrested by the sound of his own name.

"You will be a heroine," Lubona said. "The American press is alive to this great struggle. It knows how to appreciate a crisis. They are sending Beverly of the *Herald* to tell the story."

"But"—she stopped dead still, and looked at him with startled eyes—"I will not be known. It will never reach the ears of anybody. Not *the papers!*"

"Certainly not, unless you wish it," he said gravely.

"I certainly do not wish it. It is impossible. My father would never forgive me *that*. I may have my principles, but——"

Lubona interrupted her. "Your great goodness——"

At that moment Beverly smashed his two feet down upon the deck with the greatest clatter he could make, and having called attention to his proximity arose and walked away. The two moved down toward the railing, and stood silent until he was quite out of the way.

"That is that Mr. Hardin from New York,"

the girl said. "Papa knows some of his relatives."

"How do you know?" Lubona asked. He did not know how much Beverly had overheard, or whether he had recognized them.

"I picked up his cap from the deck, and it had his name inside. I wonder if he heard us! If he did, and should chance to know that man of whom you spoke, why, then——" She clasped her hands as if she wished to escape from some promise or situation.

"There is no danger. He could not have overheard." Lubona was trusting that he could explain matters if he had.

It was late when the count went into the stateroom which he and Beverly shared, and the room was in darkness except for a faint glimmer which came in from the outside. From Beverly's berth there came the deep, regular breathing of a healthy man asleep. Lubona did not touch the electric light screw, but sat down and began to undress. He unlaced his shoes, and slipped them noiselessly to the floor. Then he lifted his head like a

stag who listens. Beverly was undoubtedly asleep.

He took a box of wax matches from his pocket and struck one in careful fashion, so that the flame flared up noiselessly, and for an instant he held it high, showing his companion fast asleep. Beverly lay with his face fully exposed, and one heavy, sinewy arm, from which the pajama sleeve had fallen away, was thrown over his head. He looked very big and powerful as he lay there, Lubona thought. He gave him only a passing glance, but that sufficed to illuminate the mouth, closer set and sterner in sleep than when influenced by the mobile thoughts of waking hours, as is the case with all strong men.

The Carpathian's gaze ran quickly to the hooks on which Beverly had hung his clothes. His coat was almost by Lubona's hand. A puff sufficed to put the room in darkness again, and for a second the figure stood motionless. Then the count's hand began to creep up toward Beverly's coat. He could feel the stiff papers; they were still in the pocket. His

fingers were almost on them. There was the manilla envelope with the notebook leaves inside. If he had been a nervous man he would have trembled. He almost knew, he felt, what he would see when they were open before his eyes, but it would mean much to be certain.

The slender fingers began to slip them from the pocket. There was a movement from the berth. The breathing stopped.

"Is that you, Lubona?" Beverly asked sleepily. "Funny, isn't it, how another person in the room will pull your consciousness back! Why haven't you a light?" He put out his hand and turned the electric light screw beside his head, instantly flooding the room with its brilliancy. Lubona was taking off his coat leisurely.

"I didn't want to disturb you. I have the eyes of a cat. I can see in the darkness. It is a family trait."

"Oh, disturbance is an every day event to me. I am educated past minding it. Been playing cards?"

"No. I walked on the deck for a while."

"So did I. Rolling sea."

"Yes."

Beverly yawned, and then looked up with new interest.

"Pitch me my coat over here," he said.

"There are some papers I want to look at again."

He took the envelope from his pocket, opened it, read the notes again, and then, taking a match from his pocket, struck it and held the notes in the flame until they were ashes. Lubona, whistling a popular song, prepared for bed.

III.

THE next morning, when Beverly went on deck, he found all the passengers who owned sea legs out enjoying the wonderful brilliancy of the day. With his hands in his pockets, and Hardin's cap making a shadow over his nose, he took his place in the promenade. Marsh, the languid young man of the day before, joined him.

"Quite a lot of celebrities this time," Marsh said. "There is you, to begin with. I have heard any number of maiden ladies congratulating themselves upon the privilege of going over with the author of 'My Lady, the Queen,' and on the prospect of getting your autograph or photograph or something of that sort—a lock of hair, maybe. Tell me, do you fellows carry your photographs around for distribution, or do you divvy with the photographer, or how? I might be famous myself some day."

Beverly smoked his good cigar, and declined to answer.

"Think what a harvest the enterprising collector may have by the time she reaches the other side! Think of the prey on this ship. You, the opera singers, and the richest man in the world. They may get a sentiment out of you, and a note or two out of the opera singers, but I wonder if they will get any money out of old John Marr!"

"Richest man in the world? What are you talking about?"

"Him. They say he owns everything, including a small principality or two, over on the other side—mines, railroads, concessions. Not common gold and silver mines, but turquoise and ruby, and diamond and—well, anything expensive you like to think of. I am no lapidary myself. I don't know their names."

"Where are all these possessions?"

"That is something nobody seems to know, not even the American widows and orphans and executors who have put their savings

into his latest company. But then, that class enjoy a mystery. They say mysteries pay better interest, and the promises are greater. Nobody knows much about Marr nowadays, except that he has a pretty daughter, and he keeps her as close as he keeps his money and his secrets. Now I am a pretty decent sort of person when I am at home, and my kin have behaved themselves and held their heads above water ever since the first one landed at Plymouth Rock. I thought I could take my place almost anywhere. Yesterday I hunted up an excuse—not a very good one, to be sure—and spoke to Miss Marr. Her father made me feel like a Broadway loafer. Evidently they do not intend to know any one. Look at them there. He is like a guardian griffin.”

“I think they know Count Lubona. I heard him say he had dined with the young lady in Washington.”

“I’ll wager twenty five cents the old man doesn’t recognize him. Now watch—there he comes.” Marsh and Beverly had leaned against the railing, and the Boston man spoke with

excitement. His traditions taught him that he was a thousand times worthier of consideration in the eyes of a man like John Marr, or as an acquaintance for any man's daughter, than any third rate count, and he was still sore over his rebuff.

Lubona, tall, grave, handsome, walked by the Marrs without stopping. To Beverly's amazement, the beautiful girl looked out over the sea without the flicker of an eyelash. She appeared to have totally forgotten her talk with the Carpathian the night before.

At first Beverly thought that he must have been mistaken in what he had seen and heard; and then he looked about him. No, there was no other woman with anything like her nobility of carriage and beauty of appearance. That was the girl. She was going to perform some service for Lubona, and her father did not recognize him. Although Beverly was not an eavesdropper, he had overheard a sentence or two the night before, and he could not throw them out of his brain again. A sudden impulse overtook him.

"I will make you a wager," he said to Marsh, "that I will know Mr. Marr and his daughter before the voyage is over."

"Oh, I suppose so," Marsh replied. "Send in a photograph and one of your traveling copies of 'My Lady, the Queen,' and the trick is done. She's a girl just fresh from boarding school. They tell me all of them use that volume of yours as a book on etiquette."

"And I'll not mention my name, either." Marsh looked at him inquiringly.

"They think I am Hardin. Miss Marr picked up the cap when it blew away yesterday, and read the name inside. Hardin would lend me his name for a day or two. He is welcome to mine. I want to improve that curious old person's acquaintance. I want to hear where he keeps his hoards, and how they affect his mind."

"Material, eh?"

"Yes, I want him for material," Beverly said, and then laughed.

"I'll not bet with you," Marsh said. "You have too many cards up your sleeve."

Beverly was in a rather curious frame of mind. If his reasoning were wrong—and it was not a very strong chain—he might do his cause irretrievable harm. On the other hand, it would be infinitely to his advantage if he could make the acquaintance of John Marr without that personage suspecting his connection with the world of printing presses. He had never done any reportorial detective work, the sort that calls for subterfuges, even in his callowest days; but he had known cases where it had been necessary. His was not one of those hard consciences which can see the end justify the means, wherever the means may lead, but he saw that sometimes, for the good of the public, for which the press is under bonds to work, a man must not be too dainty with himself. He fully intended to let Mr. Marr imagine that he was Hardin, for a time, at least. Nobody on the ship would get near enough to this reserved man to tell him the truth, and Lubona had denied him once to Miss Marr. Even if he did betray him to the daughter, she would not dare tell her father.

"I'll just travel incognito," Beverly put it to himself.

He did not know exactly how he was going to do it, and he walked up and down the ship two or three times, trying to think.

"If I were a hero of romance," he said to himself, "the very skies would fall down to give me a chance. The fates always take care of the young man who sets out to make his fortune. But being a man who lives by his invention, I shall have to think of something."

He had made the turn past the Marrs for the fifth or sixth time. He had bowed when he saw them, thinking so much due for the cap episode, when he heard a noise behind him, and saw Marsh coming as fast as the careening ship would allow.

"See here, Beverly," he said, as he took his friend's arm, "I forgot something which I must tell you before you let the ship throw you across Marr's knees or begin any of those little ways by which people make chance acquaintances. Hardin is about the very worst name you could have chosen."

"What's wrong with Hardin? There isn't a better fellow alive."

"It was his father. Old Marr knew his father."

"Yes, I heard him say so. But what on earth could be the matter with Hardin's father?—a Governor, a Senator, the Spotless One! What are you talking about?"

"That was just the trouble. Of course"—with his usual airiness—"nobody could expect you to know anything about it. You are only a newspaper man. They never have any time for facts; they are too busy gathering news. But you may remember that old Senator Hardin, when he was in the Senate, was one of the few incorruptible ones."

"Yes, that's one of the reasons Hardin is a poor young fellow living with me, instead of being a millionaire."

"Exactly. And John Marr is one of the men who tried to contribute toward that end, and failed."

"You mean?"

"I mean that it was the telling of the story

of how the old Senator held out against John Marr's schemes, fifteen years ago, that informed me concerning Marr. He vowed to get even with Senator Hardin if it took his lifetime. Hardin exposed Marr's plan to grab the biggest land and railroad concession ever known in this country. Marr's failure sent him abroad. If it had not been for Senator Hardin, he would just about own the West. I heard the story told at the club the other night. Choose another name, my boy. If I had taken that bet up I wouldn't have told you. I'd have let you rush to your fate. That old hyena would ch^{ew} you up if you came near him labeled Hardin. 'Ware the dog."

"I call that a very interesting story," Beverly said, and then he took off his cap and looked at it ruefully. "Such is fate and chance! If I hadn't picked up Hardin's cap—who knows? Well, I can perhaps use the mistake for an explanation. I'll say my name is Smith. There are reasons why my own name is out of the question just now."

In his heart Beverly gave up the whole scheme. He must go on and do his work without any brilliant dashes. He lounged down the ship by Marsh's side. That young man soon departed to his usual occupation in the smoking room, and Beverly, declining his invitation, found a book. It was a new story of the eastern states of Europe, by a well known and brilliant London journalist, and Bever¹ was soon very much interested in it. It was rather a conspicuous volume, with maps and pictures, and Beverly put it up before him and let himself wander through its pages. He himself was to go over part of the ground described, he was on his way thither, and he was taking the book as a guide, besides enjoying the journalistic and diplomatic work of the writer. Beverly meant to do this sort of thing himself, and mingled with his approval were some dreams. It was with a start which left him dumb with astonishment that he heard a soft, pleasant voice addressing him, and looked up to see the tall and beautiful figure of Miss Marr beside him, her hands full of photographs.

"Pardon me," she said, "but my father saw the book in your hand, and has sent me to make a request. He left his copy of 'The Unfamiliar East' in the hotel, and finds that it is not among the titles in the ship's library. He very much needs some statistics which are given in the book"—she hurried as she felt that her speech was growing long—"and he asked if he might see the book for an hour when you had finished with it."

"Certainly. Let me take it to him now."

"And," she went on, "he asked me to bring these photographs, which are better illustrations than anything the publishers have shown."

Beverly was by no means obtuse. He knew what to do when a distinct advance was made to him, and although in the light of what Marsh had just told him he had no explanation of it, he responded to it with his usual tact. He was on his feet at Miss Marr's words, and had taken the heavy cards from her slim, loosely gloved hands.

"It is extraordinarily good of your father to

think of sending me the pictures. He must thoroughly appreciate what it means to study a country. I wonder if I can ask him some questions;" and they walked together to the spot where Mr. Marr lay back in his chair, looking, as his angles showed under the gray steamer rug, like some rocky human promontory against which social waves might break forever. Rather to Beverly's surprise, he had no need of assuming Hardin's name. Miss Marr murmured something, but it seemed to be one of those meaningless sentences with which women bridge over momentary gaps. Before he knew how, Beverly was talking about the Balkan States, and their future, and saying to John Marr things that he had never hoped to be able to say to him, asking questions, and keenly sifting the answers. He found that this gray man had dug down miles below the clever London journalist.

"And how about Carpathia?" Beverly asked at last. "That little country appears rather left out in the cold. What is its rôle?"

"Carpathia? I am on my way there now.

Carpathia's eventual end is, of course, to belong to Russia. It is a little corner broken off."

"A member of the Russian royal family is now on the throne, I believe?"

"A branch of the family," Mr. Marr said. His voice was entirely different from what Beverly had expected, and the rugged gray face took on a new and distinct character when he spoke. Beverly had never seen a man quite like this before, and he was compelled to acknowledge his strong magnetism. His voice was deep, and would have been harsh had it not been for a certain lucidity of expression. But always behind every expression of himself there was a strong and masterful personality. Beverly found himself thinking that if this man were to enter any situation his presence would be felt. He was a vibrating force.

"The present king was put on the throne two years ago," he went on, "by an uprising against Johann. He was Prince Curt, the morganatic nephew of the Grand Duke Sergius of Russia. He reigns as Boris I; a scatter

brained boy, who has developed ideas of his own in these two years. He has no sense of the wisdom of bringing his kingdom into its proper place. He cannot see an inch before his nose."

"I am thinking of traveling through Carpathia." Beverly spoke as though Carpathia were Ohio, and nothing could be more natural than to go there. "I think I might find it picturesque."

"Do you paint?" asked Miss Marr.

"Nothing to speak of. I sketch a little sometimes. The fact is, I want to go somewhere where I can live cheaply and have leisure. I want to do some studying."

"A specialty?" Mr. Marr asked, with so much real interest that the question lost all suggestion of rudeness.

"Political economy," Mr. Beverly answered, and mentally wondered if the recording angel knew his business, and had a proper sense of discrimination. "I am much interested in the subject. My—er—father devoted some years of his life to the theories of his day."

"So he did," went on the mental reservation. "He damned them all, and burnt the books."

"I think I have seen some of the writings of Senator Hardin," the millionaire said suavely. "A great subject. Do you expect to go into politics? I believe everybody who studies political economy expects to be a politician or a college professor."

"I certainly have no intention of becoming a college professor."

Beverly was young, and the romantic tides of youth rode high in his brain. He had been giving an ear and a comprehension to the man before him, but it was not in the nature of things that he should not be influenced in some measure by the young girl who sat beside him. The ways of sea life had turned almost every other woman into a rather blowsy object, but this girl was so beautiful that Beverly found himself thinking that she was as delicately drawn as a rose, and might be looked at under a microscope like any other exquisite piece of nature. He could not keep his eyes from her

face, as the talk went on. The conversation of the night before, her talk with Lubona, ran through his mind, and gave her the attraction of a mystery. What was she going to do for Lubona—what service of which her father knew nothing? She looked so innocent, so unconscious, while they talked of this far country. Beverly suddenly turned toward her.

"And do you go to Carpathia? It can hardly be so attractive as London and Paris."

"I am charmed with the prospect of going there," she said. "I am like you. I am fond of study."

Her father laughed with a peculiar and almost soundless contortion of his face.

"Fond of the study of a horse. My daughter"—speaking of her as though she were absent—"lives on horseback when we are in the country. I have taken a country house not very far from Carpathia, back in the hills. Life is primitive in Carpathia. I should be glad to see the son of my old friend, Senator Hardin, under my roof there. I might be able to give

you some practical examples of your political theories. If not exactly upon the lines of political economy"—and he smiled with a sarcasm which made Beverly wish he had chosen some other subject for his supposed studies—"still upon certain subjects which might be very useful to you in dealing with men and events."

"I shall be very glad to come, if you still care to ask me when we reach Carpathia," Beverly said, rising; "which, translated, means," he went on to himself, "if you are not lucky enough to discover that I am not the son of your old enemy whom you may succeed in getting into hot water and making a catspaw of, and that I am, instead, a man who has been sent over here to show you up, and let a lot of Americans know how you are using their money to further your own ends and to betray a free State."

"Then we will consider it an engagement," old Marr said, almost with eagerness. "You will look us up. We can make you comfortable for a time. We have taken the castle of

the Lubonas, a prominent Carpathian family. It is on the northwest road leading out of Carpeth, about thirty miles from the capital."

Beverly opened his mouth to say that Lubona was on the ship, living in the room with him—and then he paused. He wanted to get away somewhere and think. Complications enough had arisen; he would not add another. He bowed his good mornings, went away, sought a shady place, and sat down on a coil of rope. He felt in his pocket for the papers sent him by his chief, and then he remembered that they were burnt.

"So Lubona is a Carpathian, eh? Admires liberty! Has succeeded in getting the enemy of Carpathian liberty into his own house, and securing the friendship and coöperation of his daughter! Oh, indeed!" Beverly was growing cooler and cooler. "It appears at the present stage that I am not in for a plain newspaper story. What I am looking for is a melodrama. The only difficulty appears to be in knowing just how the parts are cast. I wonder if Boris I, morganatic scion of the Russian

royal family, wants to sell his kingdom to Russia, or what? What is his rôle? And what has that beautiful girl to do with it? As for Lubona, he is a scoundrel, that goes without saying—trying to entangle that beautiful child in his schemes;" which shows that Mr. James Beverly had fallen under the influence of a prejudice as old as humanity.

IV.

NATURE herself seemed to be ready to take a hand in the game to which Beverly was sitting down with a zest that filled him with excitement. Heavy weather overtook the New York, and kept along with her for days, leaving most of the passengers prostrate and the nervous ones anxious. Now and then Beverly struggled to the deserted deck, and found a calm officer ready to say a short word of politeness; but the Marrs were not visible at any time. He and Lubona, lying in their berths, were forced into an intimacy which Beverly by no means relished. He felt very sure now that he would get nothing from the count, and he was not at all sure that Lubona might not get something from him.

Four days were a blank in which he found it impossible even to make plans. He did venture to mention to the Carpathian that he

had heard Mr. Marr speak of having rented the ancestral castle of the Lubonas, but the matter of fact way in which the statement was met made Beverly feel that he had been guilty of an impertinence.

"We are poor in Carpathia. We rent our houses," the count said with dignity. "I do not know to whom mine went. I put it into the hands of an agent. I hope they are pleasant people who enjoy each other's society, for it is a lonely place, far away in the hills."

"It is John Marr and his daughter who have rented it. They are here on this ship."

"Ah, indeed!" Lubona said indifferently.

Beverly's notes had told him to report himself at once to the owner of his journal, who lived in Paris most of the year; and as soon as his ship landed he made his way there with all speed. He had a few natural heart beats as he waited in the reception room of the magnate who lived on one side of the world and managed a great newspaper on the other. He was said to be a man who knew how to deal out rewards, and who saw when they were de-

served with extraordinary shrewdness. This was his first meeting with a young man who had certainly won some laurels for his paper.

He was a disappointment to the eager young American. He was slow of speech, cold, seemingly not very well informed. Beverly found himself cut off from making any confidences or asking any advice.

"You have had instructions as to your work for the *Herald*," the owner said.

"To an extent. Yes."

The elderly man before him put the tips of his long fingers together and looked at his lieutenant from under heavy brows. "To what extent?" he asked.

"My orders told me."

"Let me see them."

"They are destroyed."

"Why?"

Beverly hesitated for a second. He had intended to tell the full story to this man, to plan with him, to ask his advice, but he changed his mind. "I thought it best," he

said firmly, and he had the pleasure of seeing a look of relief come into his chief's face.

"Well, go on."

"My orders told me that I was to go to Carpathia and investigate the company which John Marr has lately floated in America, in which his own name is prominent; that it was known that the St. Petersburg government had given him such concessions that it would be to his advantage to have Carpathia belong to Russia, and that it was suspected he had so interested American capital that whether his revolutionary scheme succeeded or failed he would personally be protected by the American government."

"Well, how far along are you?" And then, as Beverly looked at him inquiringly: "You came over in the ship with the man, didn't you?"

"He was ill for five days," Beverly said, "but he asked me to visit him in Carpathia."

The owner of the paper walked to a very ornate writing table and sat down. His expression had not changed. He picked up a

pen which looked as though it had done nothing in its jeweled life but answer notes of invitation, and wrote a line or two.

"I had Prince Curt at my shooting box three or four years ago. He is the present king of Carpathia. Get this letter to him somehow, and I think you can find out how the land lies. I hear they steal his mail, so you must find a safe delivery for it. You will not encounter much court etiquette over there. Do you know anything of Boris? It is hardly likely that you should. He is said to be up to his eyes in debt, and very anxious to lose the Carpathian throne if he can lose it to Russia, so he will be likely to be a ready tool to John Marr's hand. He wants money, to be free to marry an English woman, rumor goes. But there is no counting upon him, because he loses his heart to every pretty face he sees, or did a few years ago. He is half American, and a hothead. I hear that Marr has a pretty daughter who goes to Carpathia with him."

To save his life Beverly could not keep the color out of his face. He was indignant with

himself that the thought of that girl should have so filled his mind. That she, in her youth and innocence, should form part of the schemes of men, seemed monstrous. He had hardly seen her, had only spoken to her for a few minutes, but she was a woman.

Beverly's color went unnoticed, and the talk went on with no further reference to Miss Marr. A man had come in once or twice while they were talking, bringing cards, which were usually thrown aside with the briefest dismissal. As the great journalist took up a new one, and held it before his eyes at an angle which showed a trifling deficiency in his vision, he said in seeming conclusion :

"It is not necessary for you to go to Carpathia for a few days now—what is this? Ah! The newly appointed chamberlain of the court of Carpathia is here. I will put you in his charge;" and then to the servant, "Show Count Lubona in."

V.

HIS majesty, King Boris I, was eating his breakfast in the handsome dining room of his castle just beyond Carpath. The room was a new one, with enormous fireplaces at each end, and a series of grotesque old portraits hanging along the walls. King Boris, who was known as Prince Curt to his intimates, the Boris being as much a part of his state trumpery as his crown, suggested that the various rulers of Carpathia had left on the walls the portraits of such of their august ancestors as they wished to disown.

Spring was late in Carpathia, and while the narrow windows, which opened here and there, were stretched wide, a fire burned redly on the hearth, and the flames flickered on the silver and on the spurs on Curt's tall boots. He had seated himself sidewise, and sat with one hand beating an impatient tattoo on the

oaken boards only partly covered by the gaily embroidered cloth. Half a dozen letters lay beside his plate, and he was lifting them one by one and examining the seals. They had all been skilfully opened and resealed.

A tall officer stood by one of the carved chairs, and looked out of the window with the air of a wooden soldier. The noise at the table grew louder and louder, but he turned his head. Curt looked at him until his impatience mastered him.

"Lubona," he said, "sit down."

The tall man fell into a chair, first bowing his thanks for his sovereign's gracious permission.

"I wish you would tell them that I do not so much mind their reading my private correspondence, although I think it hardly fair to print it in the Paris papers, but I do object to their sealing it up again before they hand it over to me. It is a reflection upon my intelligence."

Lubona bowed.

"I will tell them, your majesty."

"Tell whom?" Curt looked at him with amused eyes.

"Put it in the royal orders, your majesty." He spoke with unbroken equanimity.

"Have a cigar," Curt said, handing them over. "What have you for me to do today? They told me when you came that you were full of 'go'; that no one ever had an idle minute when you were around. You ought to be. They have it over in America, where you have been so long. I wish some of those people who want to be kings would take my place long enough to let me run over to New York for a week. I'd like to see my semi native land."

"If you were to run over to New York for a week——"

"They'd let me stay there, eh? Well, I am not so sure that I should enjoy that." Curt whistled to one of his dogs and threw him a bit of meat. "We came up here to hunt, and I suppose we may as well do it, but if the sport is not better than it was yesterday, I am going to buy the menagerie in Carpeth and let it loose in the forest. For wild savages

and uncivilized barbarians, we Carpathians can have less amusement than any people I ever heard of."

Boris' crown rested heavy on his head this morning. He had found a London society journal among his papers, and it had given him the information that the girl sweetheart whom he had not seen for two years, and whose rank was not high enough to aspire to a throne, was about to become a duchess, evidently finding a duke in the hand worth a king in the bush. His comic opera kingdom had been amusing enough at first, but as time went on and left him on the stage alone, with few spectators, he found his rôle tiresome.

"Get out the horses. Is the American to join us this morning?"

"He will meet us at the point of rocks on the northwest road," Lubona answered.

Half an hour later they were in their saddles on their way to the hills, accompanied only by two servants. From the beginning of his reign Boris had refused to have any Russians

about him, but he had found it stupid work. Now, as he looked at his retainers, he thought he had never seen two more sullen looking wretches. "Cutthroats!" he thought, and started to say as much to Lubona, but remembered that he too was Carpathian.

The spring sunshine was brilliant, although there was a chill in the air, and away up toward the north there was an ominous cloud that told of rain; but there could be no turning back for that. The showers came and went. The sun was not overshadowed until they were deep in the forest, in those terraces below the rocky slopes which always were thickly covered by the spring leafage.

The rain had begun to fall before they felt the drops, and the wind came up in squalls. Lubona drew his horse up sharply, and pointed through the opening in the trees. Gray towers showed across the valley there, rising dimly through the slant of the rain, above the tree tops.

"We are in for a heavy storm, your majesty," he said. "Just across the valley is my old

home. The bridge is not far above here. On the other side we shall have a clear road. The house has been taken by some Americans, but they will be only too glad to give you shelter."

"Shelter?" Curt said impatiently. "I am not a child to be frightened by rain. The country appears to be full of Americans. They want to rent everything from the throne down."

Lubona gave him a quick look.

"This man's name is Marr," he said.

"I have heard of him," the king replied shortly. "I shall not go to his house."

Boris' servants had disappeared, galloping ahead up the winding road by Lubona's orders. He had called aloud to go on, that the wind was blowing trees down from the steep rocks above the road, and there might be danger for the king.

"Was it near here I was to meet the American, Mr. Beverly?"

"Not for several miles."

"We will push on."

The rain was pouring now, pushing aside the young leaves and sending them to the ground. Curt rode rapidly, his hat pulled down and his face bent to save it from the blinding downpour. Rocks made a wall up the mountain side on one hand, and on the other a steep slope, dense with foliage, descended to a stream. Not far ahead an ivy covered bridge led across the stream toward the gray towers, and there the road turned.

"Let us at least seek shelter in the bridge, your majesty," Lubona pleaded, but Boris was obstinate.

"If you are afraid of a drop of rain, you may turn back," he said; "go over to your house and ask the Americans for dry clothing. For my part, I shall go on until I meet Beverly. The rain will soon be over;" and he touched his large bay hunter with the spur, and rode rapidly around the turn in the road.

Beverly, standing inside the bridge, saw the king when he had passed, and started after him. He was in time to see Lubona draw in his own horse sharply, expectantly, and then

to see a young tree whose roots had been grounded in a thicket, fall from the hillside across the king's horse, bringing man and beast to the earth. The horse gave a scream, and struggled to extricate himself, throwing the unconscious Boris sidewise, and then lay still, with eyes dilated with terror and pain.

In one second Lubona was off his horse. The tree, not a very large one, had fallen across the horse's flank just behind the rider, bringing him down stunned and bleeding from the blows of the branches, and when Beverly and Lubona reached him he had not moved. Involuntarily the American looked up to the place where the tree had fallen. For one instant he saw a face peering through the bushes.

"Where are those servants?" Lubona stormed. "Will you stay here? I will ride to the castle across the bridge for assistance."

The two men had extricated Boris from the branches, and put him in a sheltered place under the overhanging rocks. They could not lift the tree from the horse.

Beverly's face was grim as he looked at the wounded man. There were no bones broken, but there was an ugly gash on his head.

"They meant to kill him, and Lubona knew it," the American said, as he wiped away the blood.

In a very few minutes the chamberlain came galloping back.

"We must take the king to the castle," he said, "and as he did not want to go there, and they are strangers, and—for other reasons—we will call him Count Festin. And you"—looking at Beverly keenly—"over there you must be known as Mr. Hardin."

Beverly did not look up as Lubona spoke. He was bending over the king, giving him that "first aid to the injured" which he had learned at the beginning of his reportorial career, when ambulance cases sometimes came his way. Incidentally, as he stanching the blood on the royal brow, he was realizing that a drunken Irishman on the New York pavements was made out of much the same sort of clay as a king on a Carpathian hillside.

Boris stirred and tried to open his eyes, but he winced with pain and quickly closed them again. Still it seemed to Beverly that some light of consciousness flickered through his lids. Behind Lubona came a train of servants tramping through the rain, carrying a wicker couch.

"It would hardly be wise to attempt to move the king to the castle if he did not wish to go there," the newspaper man said. "He will regain consciousness in a few moments, and then he can give his own orders. Is there a surgeon near?"

"No nearer than Carpeth, and I should fail in my duty did I not immediately get his majesty under shelter. His hurt may be very serious."

"Where are his servants?"

"They were sent on ahead, and are probably in some safe place."

"They must have taken your orders to look out for falling rocks literally, and reached their safe place by crossing the mountains, for I saw nothing of them on the road."

"They are mountain men," the chamberlain said, but his eyes and Beverly's sent out glances like crossing swords.

"We will at least release the horse before we start with the king," the American replied, and he turned and spoke to the men in German.

He might as well have spoken Choctaw for all they understood. They were a curious looking set, with their hair cut short across their foreheads, and deep set blue eyes; but they saw the horse's plight and Beverly's movement toward it, and started to help him. Involuntarily he moved around so that he could keep an eye on Lubona standing by the king. In a moment the big horse was released, and pulled to his feet. They had expected to find it with a broken back, but it seemed to be only bruised. The animal stood and shivered as Beverly's hand was drawn down its flank, but it was sound of limb, and the man put the bridle over his arm.

Lubona and two of the men had put the king on the couch and were carrying him

slowly towards the bridge. The rain was still falling in blinding torrents. As they reached the center of the bridge, Beverly called out from the dusk behind them, where he walked with the horses:

"Why not stop here? It seems inhuman to take a wounded man on in this rain. He will be better off here in the bridge till the storm abates."

"We have umbrellas and rugs over him," the chamberlain said obstinately. "It is best to take him on."

"I am thinking you may find it hard to explain your actions to him when he recovers," the American retorted hotly.

"I am responsible for him, and I must use my own judgment."

Stepping between the horses, Beverly took a revolver from his pocket and looked it carefully over. It is sometimes inconvenient to have too knowing a witness, and he felt that he was taking that position with the chamberlain.

The avenue of lindens and horse chestnuts

sheltered the road before the old gray pile toward which the little procession wended its way, and the pungent scent of the wet linden bloom perfumed the air. If it had not been for the dashing rain it would have been a beautiful scene. The castle was deep in the wood, only its turrets showing above the tree tops. It was a huge, rough place when they finally came in sight of it. It looked more like a prison than the summer home of a rich American who had brought his daughter here for pleasure. But the inside was to tell a different story.

Apparently the visitors were expected, for the door stood open, and a very obsequious servant started out as though he would come through the rain to meet them, but a command behind held him back. As they drew near they saw Elinor Marr standing in the great hallway. Her father was nowhere in sight. Her beauty and wholesomeness, and the anxious interest on her face, relieved Beverly's mind and dissipated a wild suspicion which had been growing there. There could

be only goodness and sweetness in this girl, surely. When the couch was brought in, she bent over the king before she spoke to either Lubona or Beverly, although the American thought that the presence of the Carpathian brought a new flush to her cheek.

"Is he badly hurt?" she asked.

"Not seriously," Beverly said. "If you will have him put into a warm bed, I think he will pull around presently."

"Will you see that everything is done properly for him then, Mr. Hardin?"

She began giving directions for having the couch carried up the wide, shallow stairs and into an apartment full of luxuries, which Beverly felt, with a little thrill at entering this maiden bower, belonged to herself. It was not many minutes until the king was safely deposited in the middle of the bed. Beverly carefully began to take away the handkerchief bandages, and substitute others which had been brought to him. He was bathing the king's face when he saw the pale lips move, although the eyes remained closed.

"Tell the man to go," they whispered almost noiselessly.

For some time Beverly had imagined that the king was conscious. As Miss Marr bent over him down stairs and then turned away, there had been the flutter of an eyelid. He went on with his bandaging, calling upon the attendant for necessary services, and finished his work calmly and coolly. Then he drew the sheets straight and spoke to the man.

"You may go now," he said. "I will watch beside Count Festin. He must not be confused when he is first aroused."

Beverly had taken off his own wet shooting coat, and quite leisurely had begun to get into dry clothing which had been sent to him by Miss Marr. Her father's clothes were not such a bad fit for him. He looked up from drawing on a pair of slippers, and saw Boris sitting up in bed with an expression of amusement, daredeviltry, and anxiety. It would take more years than the span of life allows to tame that wild spirit, or get it to working on commonplace lines.

"Why do they call you Hardin?" was the king's first question.

"They have an idea that that is my name," Beverly answered, going on with his dressing.

"And I presume it is for the same reason that I am known as Count Festin?"

"Doubtless."

Boris hugged his knees. As Beverly looked at his face, crowned by the white swathings, yet full of the brilliancy of life, he thought that whatever Lubona's game happened to be, he had chosen an adversary worthy of his best efforts—one whose ways were not to be counted. He took a sudden resolution. Lubona would doubtless be in the room in a moment; only the greatest necessity would have kept him so long away. Beverly was not made up of hesitations. He sat down on the side of the bed.

"You may properly consider that I am meddling with affairs which can be of no concern of mine, Count Festin," he said, putting in the lesser title because his tongue instinctively hung over "your majesty" or "sire";

"but I am going to tell you that I have reason to believe that your life is in danger. I do not know why or for what. I only know what my eyes saw. The accident of the tree falling upon you was no accident. The trunk was thrown upon your horse by men on the hillside."

"So I suspected," Boris said calmly.
"Lubona was at the bottom of it."

"You know that he wants to kill you, and yet you keep him about you?"

"I am not altogether sure of it. I think he only wanted to hurt me, to get me over here. What I am trying to discover is what he wanted to bring me over here for. As I understand it, this place is leased to Marr, who is trying to raise the Russian flag over the country. Now Lubona—is this boring you?"

"No."

"Well, it would bore me if I had no interest in it. Lubona belongs to an ardent patriot family. They hate Russia, and always have hated her. They were among the very few

supporters of Johann when I ousted him from the throne and seated myself on it. Now why should Lubona want to bring me where I could be bribed and worked upon—supposing I were that sort of a man—by Marr? I have already been approached by an emissary of the old plotter, but I hadn't thought of selling the country outright, although sometimes I think I would be glad enough to get rid of it. The divine right of myself to sit on the Carpathian throne doesn't impress me deeply. Who was that pretty girl down stairs?"

"Miss Marr."

"Friend of Lubona's?"

"I believe so."

Boris settled back into his pillows, and looked around the room in an interested fashion.

"I think I will stay a while," he said. "There is no use in having too speedy a recovery, but I want Lubona to hang around. I am attached to Lubona;" and he smiled again. "But what did he want to bring me here for? And why does he plan to keep

these people from knowing who I am, and—well, generally speaking, what's his little game?"

Beverly sat silent for a moment or two. He was trying to fit the puzzle together in his own mind, fearing all the while to find a certain solution which would preclude any other—one that would implicate that girl. Finally Boris broke the silence again.

"Does Lubona suspect that you know of the attempt to make an 'accidental death' of me?"

"He must know it."

"I wonder what is keeping him so long—although, by Jove, if I were with that pretty girl I think all my crimes might be rising up for vengeance and I would not move until she sent me."

"Isn't this Lubona's ancestral castle?"

"I am sure I do not know. I believe it is. I am hardly so well acquainted with the country seats of my nobility as William of Germany or Victoria of England;" and Boris chuckled at seeing himself in the class with

those two most consciously important sovereigns.

"Did Mr. Marr keep the Lubona family servants?"

"How should I know? Now really, this government is not so paternal as all that."

"The idea has come to me," Beverly said, "that we may all be in Lubona's hands. The Marrs and you yourself are all, from his point of view—or at least you and Mr. Marr are—enemies of his country. Now, what is to prevent his keeping you here and seizing the government?"

Boris sat up a trifle straighter, but he did not appear to be very seriously alarmed.

"They are a quarrelsome lot, these Carpathians. They belong to the yeasty class that is always dissatisfied with whatever is. They are probably the original Celts. They are a thousand times better off under the protection of Russia, but they are chafing under it. If they had any common sense, they would be still better off were they to be absorbed into Russia altogether; but I can sympathize with

their dislike of that idea. We should all be benefited by some change which we will not consider."

"And if they did allow themselves to belong to the White Bear, you would no longer be king."

Boris laughed. "You never were a king, were you? I was never a crown prince, nor even an heir presumptive. I had no time to fit myself to the idea of a throne. I came in on a vaulting pole. I should be as lucky as the Carpathians if the Russian flag were set up in Carpathia, and if the American gentleman under whose temporary roof we are resting were to get his little plans through; but, as I said before, I sympathize with the Carpathians. I suppose no man ever willingly resigned a crown. It's a fascinating bauble."

"But why not fear Lubona?"

"For the simple reason that he is not a leader of men. The rest of his fellow conspirators want just as much for themselves as they want to give him. These people have no conception of a republic. They are like bees.

They can't swarm until they have a queen—or a king. I suppose they will get somewhere after a while, but a few days isn't going to make any difference."

"I fear you are mistaken."

Boris fell back among the pillows with a laugh which Beverly thought reckless.

"Your majesty," he said, "I fear the responsibilities of your kingdom rest lightly upon you."

"Ah, if you knew how heavy they were!" Boris sighed. "If you knew what an uninteresting lot the Carpathians are, and how I am obliged to keep a straight face when my ministers come to an audience in pink satin neckties, hand painted, and holding silk hats from the Bon Marché in their dirty hands. Allow me a little holiday with that pretty girl down stairs. Besides, I am too ill to be moved. The government will go on for a day or two without me. My proper aide de camp is ill; Lubona is taking his place, and Lubona I can keep with me. Think of it! I haven't seated myself at a dinner table with pretty

women to look at, and civilization generally apparent, for months! I can stay here without any loss of dignity, because they do not know I am the king. They are Americans. Oh, nonsense! I am not going to argue with myself any longer."

He pushed back the sheets and sat on the side of the bed, and Beverly could only think of a madcap college boy up to a new piece of mischief, and delighted with the prospect.

A soft knocking at the door proclaimed Lubona. He stopped in a dramatic astonishment when he saw the king seated with crossed knees, swinging one foot. Boris' head was bound up, but the paleness had left his face. Its round contours were flushed, his full lips were of their usual color, and the gleam on the black pupils of his eyes proclaimed that the king was himself again so far as spirit was concerned.

"You brought me here after all, Lubona," he said gaily.

"Your majesty will not be able to move." The Carpathian was disturbed, and it showed

in his manner. He still wore his wet and stained uniform.

"Certainly not. See if you cannot get my clothes dry, and your own. Beverly here appears to have been provided for. I am going to go down to dinner, if they will ask me."

"But your head?"

"It doesn't look pretty, but I don't believe all these bandages are necessary. Stick on some more plaster." He rose and tried to walk across the room, but a sudden faintness took him, and he fell forward. Beverly caught him and put him into a chair.

"It is all folly," he said. "I am going down to dinner. Where is old Marr? It appears to me that he might come and pay his respects. He has a distinguished and injured visitor."

"He is away, but will be at home to-night."

"Ah, that accounts for your long absence, eh?" Boris was speaking in short sentences, almost like an intoxicated man. "If I can't

go down to dinner, why shouldn't the young lady——" He put his hand up to his bandaged head. "I am tired. You had better put me back to bed," he said. Then he laughed again. "You know," he went on, "it is customary, when any distinguished personage meets with an accident, and is carried to the house of the beautiful stranger, that she shall nurse him back to health and strength. I want all of my prerogatives." But by this time he was back on the bed.

VI.

BEVERLY'S position was by no means to his liking. He had pictured his visits to the Marrs' establishment very differently. With the airy castle building of youth he had imagined himself riding out from Carpeth and sitting for an hour, uncommunicative, making an entirely conventional call. Instead of that, he was domiciled in John Marr's home, actually wearing his clothing and eating his salt. It was extraordinarily good salt, although Beverly's throat ached as he swallowed it. He sat by Boris' bedside and watched him while he slept like an exhausted child. The American was satisfied now that there was no real danger from the king's hurts, and was reconciled to having no physician. He must get Boris to leave in the morning. And it was as well that the story of his accident should not get back to Carpeth.

Beverly did not know why he should have espoused the king's cause, except that the man was in danger, and it was his instinct to fight on the side of the attacked; and there was something likable in the young monarch, notwithstanding his youth and flippancy. The two were of nearly the same age, but Beverly felt years the superior of his companion.

He walked about the room and looked at the pictures and trinkets with curiosity. He had never had a sister, and there was something intimate and personal in seeing the bottles and brushes and thousand and one toilet toys which lay on the tables. He picked up the books Elinor Marr had brought with her to read, and was delighted to find some old friends, as well as some that gave him a pleasant sense of masculine superiority. He had settled himself into an arm chair with a shaded lamp and one of these, when he heard a *rat tat* on the window. It was an old, mullioned sash, and Beverly could easily fancy branches of tall trees, or twigs of ancient ivy, swaying against it from outside. After glance-

ing up for a moment, he went on with his book. But the noise grew persistent. He looked once toward the king, who was still sleeping; then he went to the window and opened it. As he let the casement softly back, his hand stung from the sharp blow of a tiny pebble.

The rain had ceased, and a watery moon was sailing through clouds hanging low over the tree tops. He could see nothing below, for a row of fir trees made a thick blackness all along that side of the house. His head and face were plainly visible to any one below, for the lamp and the moon united to bring out his features.

"St—t," some one said. "Come out."

Beverly's first impulse was to catch at an ivy branch and let himself to the ground, for the voice was a woman's, and sounded anxious. Then he thought to himself that it might be a trap.

"What do you want?" he asked.

"Are you the American?" The voice was speaking very bad English.

"What do you want?"

"Come out."

"No."

"Wait, then. Stay there. I must speak to you now."

A spot made itself visible in the blackness, and Beverly could see that whoever it was was climbing a tree which stood about ten feet from the window. No branch grew toward the house, but the broken end of a bough showed where one had recently been sacrificed, evidently for coming too near my lady's casement. Beverly watched the figure with eagerness. Like a cat it came up the branches, and as it reached the radius of the light he could see that it was a woman. Skirts swished against the wet boughs, and a small head pushed its way out. The climber crept out upon the short stump of the lopped bough, and shrank back against the tree, a quaint little figure.

Her dress was that of the better class of Carpathian peasants. Her little round jacket, trimmed with gray lambskin, fitted close to

her figure, which had none of the shapelessness of the bloused and uncorseted women Beverly had seen in the towns and on the hillsides, and the little red cap on the black braids did not cover the head of a peasant. It was no peasant's face that looked in at the American. As the light first struck it, Beverly received a disagreeable impression. She was very small, hardly five feet, he mentally calculated, as she stood there like an elf. She gave him the unpleasant sensation with which a large majority of men look upon a very small, dark woman. She has the elements of the witch; he sees in her the stunting of large traits of mind. The calmness, the charm of queenly womanhood are not there.

And this woman, at the first glance, reminded Beverly of Lubona, if Lubona could suddenly have become a small creature with a feline femininity. Her nose was aquiline, with a suggestion of the Hebrew, and her eyes were bright and black. She was an uncanny object, yet picturesque and full of life, and Beverly's quick, impressionistic mind told him

that she would doubtless have been an enticing creature to a certain class of men—to which he thanked goodness he did not belong.

“Put that lamp back,” were the first words she said, in a rather imperious tone, and then: “Is the king there?”

Beverly put the light out of range at her first request, but he did not answer her question.

“You should tell me. I am not ready to take any risks for you, but if it is the king it is a different matter.”

“Who are you?”

She spoke execrable English, evidently thinking it the only language he would be likely to understand, but her intonations were those of an educated woman. “That is no affair of yours,” she said in substance. She lifted her head until she could see into the room. In an instant Beverly was between her and the king. “Why isn’t Lubona here with you? I knew he was not. He is? I suppose, making love to the creature.” She spoke with
“What is he going

She gave a vicious set to her teeth, and looked like a savage, her black eyes gleaming in the half light. "I suppose he is going to keep her here with the rest of you. Go down stairs and warn her. Tell her that Lubona is a faithless hound, that he means to kill the king and her father and carry her off."

"What do you know of the king?"

"I know he was hurt today, and I know it would be well for him to get away from here, back to his house in Carpath."

"So that he could be ambushed and killed on the road?"

"He would have to take his chances of that, I suppose. I know nothing of that."

They had been talking in low tones. Suddenly the girl drew back against the tree until she seemed to disappear like a dryad into the trunk. Beverly drew his head inside. Below a man moved across a patch of moonlight, and Beverly saw the gleam of the faint white rifle barrel. When it had passed again for the girl, but she had gone. He had not had time to slip down.

"St—st—st!" he called, but there was no answer. He looked hastily about the room. The door was locked, and Boris slept. He put out the lamp, and left the room in total darkness. His eyes had grown so accustomed to looking at the tree outside that he could see its outlines perfectly by the moonlight which struck it here and there. He slipped Marr's big slippers from his feet, stood for an instant on the window sill, measuring the distance, and then made a leap into the darkness for the cut branch. It was an easy jump for the athletic young American. His feet landed on the stump, and with his hands he clutched at the trunk of the tree. Then, quick as lightning, he put his arm into a shadowy mass beside him and seized the girl.

"Let me go!" she said viciously.

"I will not. Tell me what you came here for. Who are you?"

"That I will not tell you. I came here to tell the king to leave the house, and to put Lubona out of the country, kill him, I do not care what."

"What has he done to you? If you know his plans, why do you want to betray them to the king, or to any one?" He could feel the slender body pulsing under his arm with some strong emotion.

"Because he is a traitor, a liar, one whose word cannot be believed. He deserves to be shot, but *first* he shall see his plans fail."

"What are his plans?"

"He is so taken up with that big white idiot he has brought from America that he has almost forgotten that he ever had any plans," she hissed out bitterly.

They were whispering now, and Beverly, holding her there in his arm, felt an inclination to shake the woman.

"He did not bring Miss Marr. She came with her father," he said with an unreasonable degree of stiffness. The girl gave a hoarse little laugh under her breath which did not have a pleasant sound.

"Are you following after her too? Maybe Lubona brought her, and she brought you. Then you ought to be ready to get her away

from him—if he doesn't kill you first," she added. "Let me go." She tried to push his arm away, evidently finding cause for hating him if he too followed the American girl, but she might as well have expended her puny strength against an iron band.

"Tell me, how am I to get the king away? He is hurt."

"This is a very old house," she said, "and the stables are part of it. You can get to them from the lower hall. Under the staircase that comes up here, there is a door which leads into the passage. This takes you to the stables, into the very stalls where the horses stand. Just behind the horses, a heavy door, locked on the inside, leads out into part of that fir wood. Get into the road, and the king knows the way. Then send back here for Lubona, and he will have to fly or——"

"To fly without the white ediot, eh?"

"Or die," she said grimly. Beverly had relaxed his arm, and she had slipped away from him, and was down on the ground; but as she left, she spoke a last word aloud. She

darted from under the tree before Beverly had time to move. He, too, must descend, for he could not jump back to the window sill, though he could probably climb up to it by the thick ivy. He had thought of that when he leaped down. The girl had not gone ten paces, when a man sprang from the shadow and caught her arm, but she said something to him angrily and he let her go. She was but one more shadow among many.

The man moved under the tree. He had heard talking, and evidently, recognizing the woman, had supposed her to be talking to a friend. His tone was respectful, but Beverly could not tell what he said, for he spoke Carpathian. The American did not dare to answer, knowing that his first word would betray him and perhaps the girl; and he was determined now to try to get the king away. So he gave an answer that was not in words. As the man came around the tree, and stood directly under him, Beverly put his hands on a branch above his head, swung out and let himself fall full upon the man.

They came heavily to the ground together, and Beverly put out his hands to catch at the man's throat and choke any outcry before it could reach the air. His fingers closed upon what he felt was a brawny neck, but the man lay still, evidently stunned. Beverly had no intention of letting him recover. He had known a game in his American youth called "playing 'possum," and he feared that the Carpathian might know the trick if he did not know the name. He felt in the pocket of the coat he had put on, and found a large old fashioned silk handkerchief. Then he searched the man's pockets. In one he found a big clasp knife, which made an admirable gag, combined judiciously with the handkerchief. Beverly smiled grimly, as he wondered if the handkerchief had John Marr's name on it. He seemed to leave the marks of other men in his wake.

It was rather mean to take the man's own scarf to tie his hands tightly behind him, but Beverly had no scruples. When all was safe, he lifted the man in his powerful arms and pushed him back under the ivy at the foot of

the vine. The leaves were thick and dark, and very wet. Beverly hoped that the fellow was not susceptible to cold, and then, giving him an extra shove, went hand over hand up the vine, and back again through the window.

He groped his way to the bed and put out his hand to the place where the king's head had lain. He intended to awaken him, tell him what he had learned from the girl in the tree, and take counsel as to the best way of getting out of the castle. He felt all over the pillows, but the king's head was not there. The space was quite empty.

Beverly walked rapidly around the bed, thinking that the king must have rolled out in an uneasy sleep; but before he could reach the other side he heard the scratch of a match, and by the light of a blue flame saw Boris standing in the center of the room. His languor was all gone again. He had been asleep for three hours, and he looked ready for anything.

"There are some men," he said gaily, but

in lowered tones, "who would fall out of the clouds and find an appointment ready made. Who was it, and how did she find you?"

Beverly, relieved, sat down on the sofa, and told Boris his story, after the match had burned out.

"The thing to do," he said, "is to get into the hall, and then into the stable. My horse is there, and you can get away."

"And you?"

"Oh, if the worst comes, I can get away upon your horse, if there is nothing better—if Lubona's horse is not there. I fear the horses belonging to the Marrs have outside quarters. It cannot be according to American ideas of comfort to have the horses in the house all the time."

"Do you intend to stay here?"

"I cannot go and leave that girl alone in the house as Lubona's prisoner. Her father is away from home."

"Nor, by heaven, will I! I will stay as well. I will go down and shoot that villain, and let this trouble end before it has begun."

"If you kill Lubona, and in this house, you precipitate what you fear, and you do that lovely girl a cruel wrong. No, it is your place to go. It is mine to stay."

"I enjoy a little gaiety myself now and then," Boris said. "Why should you have all the fun to yourself while I sneak away to Carpeth? Oh, no! As I said before, I need a touch of civilization, and I am going to get it. An hour or two will make very little difference. Where are my clothes?"

"They are there. They were dried and pressed for you."

Boris proceeded to dress himself, meanwhile ringing the bell and sending a servant to ask if Miss Marr would allow Count Festin to come down and thank her for her kindness in sheltering him, as he had quite recovered.

"Of course, the common sense thing to do," Beverly grumbled, "is to get out of this window, horse or no horse, and get away before another guard is put to watch it;" but his remark found no encouragement.

VII.

WHEN Count Festin and Mr. Beverly, both in their own clothes again, walked into the drawing room which Miss Marr had created out of a barn-like room in the old Lubona castle, their hostess came forward to meet them with a charming air of solicitude.

Boris had taken up a little white cashmere scarf which he found lying on one of the chairs where Miss Marr had thrown it. He had buried his face in its folds, and delighted in the faint orris odor which hung to it; and then he had wrapped it around his head like a turban, hiding his bandages and giving his dark, brilliant, oval face an oriental expression. Rising above his dark undress uniform it made him a figure out of a romance—a fact of which he was acutely conscious. There was always a suggestion of barbaric splendor about Boris, and had been from his infancy. His

mother had delighted in his beauty, and had loaded him with ornament. Now his fingers were full of splendid rings, which so became them that no one would have asked him to leave off one on the score of good taste. As he took Miss Marr's white, firm hand, entirely unringed, in his jeweled one, and bent over it, Beverly, with an emotion for which he hated himself, saw her face turn rosy and smiling. She herself could not have explained why.

No woman could ever quite explain her interest in Boris. From the Prince Curt days around the Russian court, every woman knew that he always left her, whether she was old or young, with a pleased consciousness that he had passed that way. It was more of an appeal to her maternal affection than anything else. For all his size and beauty and ready audacity, and in spite of the fact that he sat on a throne, he was a boy to these women hearts, and would be until his hair was white. He asked their sympathy—quite unconsciously, for sometimes it bored him when the giver was not young or interesting.

Elinor Marr was altogether interesting. She was handsome, and Boris noted with delight that she possessed that quality which the French call "*chic*" and the Americans "style." She was as full of individuality, of expression of herself, as he himself. To Beverly she seemed years older than on shipboard. Her long dinner gown, her dominating air, astonished him. Lubona was nowhere in sight; and if she had any idea that her guests were other than Mr. Hardin, son of her father's old friend, and Count Festin, a country nobleman of Carpathia, she did not betray her knowledge. Beverly did not believe that she suspected them.

In ten minutes she had explained her father's absence and promised them that he would soon return.

"Count Lubona went away only a short time ago," she said. "You know he is chamberlain to the king, and he had some messages to send on the king's business, although he too will soon return."

"Have you known my friend Lubona long?" Boris asked with great politeness.

"He reminds me that I once met him at a dinner party in Washington," she replied; "but he had never been a guest in our house until we took his castle, and he came to see my father, to inquire whether we were comfortable."

Beverly could not resist reminding her that Lubona had crossed the ocean on the same ship with her, but she met the statement with a total lack of interest, although he knew she must remember that he had seen her with Lubona that night on the deck. She puzzled and tormented him. He longed to understand her, to fathom the mystery in which she seemed to be moving.

He found that he could wander about the rooms quite unnoticed. Boris was taking up Miss Marr's attention. Indeed, she seemed to ignore Beverly ostentatiously.

"Perhaps she has heard what friends her father and mine were," he said to himself.

A large piano stood in one corner of the room, littered with the sort of plunder that women gather about them—photographs in

silver frames, fans, and enameled boxes. A screen of ivory and sandalwood reached higher than Beverly's head, and after he had stood behind it for a moment or two, and saw that he was not noticed, he slipped on through the door and into the great hall. Nobody was there. The room kept its resemblance to the other Carpathian castles, its original furnishing still remaining.

Beverly went directly to the door under the stairs, but there was a heavy oaken chest standing before a tightly fastened piece of tapestry. He pulled at one end of the chest and found it very heavy, but he could move it. It made a grating sound on the floor, and he stood for a moment intently studying the heroic pattern of the tapestry. He could say that it was for that purpose that he moved aside the chest, if any one came.

But no one came. This was not the main hall of the castle. That was on the other side of the room where the king sat. Beverly took a knife from his pocket, and, feeling the vandal that he was, cut a slit along the edge

of the panel which held the tapestry, and then another. It would take half an inch, perhaps, off either edge. Evidently the woman in the tree had not been in the house lately. A little door was underneath, and he found that it had a bolt. Then he restored the tapestry to its place, and walked back into the drawing room, called by a voice he could not resist. Elinor Marr was at the piano, singing.

The sound sent the pendulum of Beverly's mind swinging back again. She must be gentle and good and sweet, guiltless of plots, to have a voice like that. He did not analyze the emotion which made him decide on the instant that Boris must not stay here any longer, that this was a dangerous neighborhood for him. It seemed like criminal dallying to Beverly, as the young king leaned over the piano, apparently lost to everything except the pleasure of the passing moment. He would see that the horse was ready; then he would get away on the pretense of going to bed, and would mount Boris on the best steed to be had and send him toward Carpath.

Just once, a thought that the girl in the tree might be a mere decoy, sent to get Boris into the fir wood, crossed his mind. The guard had known her, to be sure, but he evidently had not expected to find her there. No, he would believe her. He was beginning to understand how a woman might do anything to get the man she cared for—and the woman in the tree was evidently jealous of Lubona—away from the white presence of Elinor Marr.

He pulled back the tapestry, opened the door wide enough to squeeze through, and found himself in a rough passage which was in total blackness as soon as the door was shut behind him. There was little danger of the way of his going being discovered, for the hall was dim, and he had arranged the chest to look as though it had been purposely placed in its new position.

A wax match showed that the passage stretched forward for some distance. He could only see for a few feet, but there came to his acute consciousness a sense of space. The floor was of earth, and very dry. He went on

without any cautions, and in a few minutes came to a door which had evidently been supplied with peep holes long ago. It was of solid oak, but here and there were cracks and chinks. Through these Beverly heard voices as he came near, and saw lights. He had no idea how he was to get through, and he could not strike another match for fear of its being seen. But his scruples did not prevent his stopping to listen. He recognized the voice of John Marr.

"Whose horses are these?" Marr asked.

"They belong to a gentleman who was hurt in the storm today and his friend, a foreigner, sir. They were brought here by Count Lubona, who has the honor of owning the castle, sir."

"Where is his horse?"

"He took it away. He has gone. He said he would return and see if his friend was seriously hurt, sir."

"Bring a fresh horse in here for me. I shall go out again tonight, later."

Mr. Marr spoke as if it were the most natural

251403A

thing in the world for an elderly gentleman to go riding around in the middle of the night over the Carpathian hills, and the man received the order in the same spirit. He was a Carpathian who could speak German after a fashion, and was airing his accomplishment. Evidently he thought the ways of foreigners were beyond criticism.

Beverly ran back along the passage as fast as his long legs would carry him. He must not be missing when his host arrived.

"I cannot have him find his daughter alone with a strange man," he said grimly. "I am an old friend of the family,"

VIII.

IF John Marr was surprised to find two young men alone with his daughter, he concealed the feeling, as well as any possible displeasure. Boris imagined that this was an ordinary proceeding of American fathers and daughters. He saw nothing unusual in the situation. When Marr came in, he arose and greeted him respectfully, as a count from the Carpathian hills might be expected to greet the great financial magnate.

It seemed to Beverly that the Carpathian climate had had a curious effect upon Marr. Color had come into his thin, gray cheeks, and a light into his deep eyes. It seemed as if he was looking upon futures which pleased him. He was the adventurer who sees land in sight. He might have been a Columbus in the prow of his vessel, viewing the new continent. Beverly knew that he felt his plans to be

assured. He was so certain that he almost invited congratulations.

"It is a great pleasure to welcome the son of my old friend under my roof," he said, holding Beverly's hand in one of his thin ones. "I hope you are going to make a stay with us."

"Only a few hours this time. I was going to ask you to lend us an extra horse, as I fear Count Festin's is disabled. My friend appears to be well enough to travel, and important business calls me to Carpath."

A smile, with some sarcasm in it, drew down the corners of Marr's mouth.

"An important new book on political economy? Oh, no. That can wait. Your friend is not well enough to ride. At any rate, before you go, I am going to ask you to have supper with me. I always sup alone. Elinor does not care for supper."

He looked at her with an expression which she did not care to deny. The man seemed fairly intoxicated by knowledge of some secret which the others did not share. Beverly had

no opportunity to speak alone to the king until they were going into the supper room. He, too, was in a fever of excitement.

"You must go away as soon as possible," he whispered. "Every instant adds to your peril. You may be assassinated, as other kings in Carpathia have been. Lubona has slipped away."

"And you?"

"I must stay."

"Why? The girl's father is here to protect her."

"But he is going again."

"And I suppose you do not consider it your task to tell this man what you have heard?"

"Lubona is his daughter's friend," Beverly began.

"I am going to stay and see it out," Boris said obstinately. "Marr is as much an enemy to my throne as Lubona. I am going to see what I can learn of his plans. Upon my soul, I think he does not know me. His daughter has been talking Russia to me all evening.

She is full to the brim of the sort of milk and water sympathy you foreigners have for anarchy, when it is in another man's country. It is a pretty trait in a woman. Now I am going to see what her father talks about. She is lovely and earnest and beautiful. There is no country in the world like America for women," he went on carelessly. To Beverly every word seemed like an insult to the girl, but he felt that he had no right to resent it.

"You and Marr may both be without plans by morning," he said warningly.

They found supper set on the round table in the center of the great dining hall. It was a Carpathian supper of cheese and wine, and the smoked flank of a mast fed boar; but the wines were not all the heavy grape juice of the country. There were slender golden bottles from the Rhine, and silver ice buckets that showed the protruding seals of champagnes. Evidently Marr was knowing in the ways of a cosmopolite who takes the best from every country.

Boris had the appetites of a Russian, and the

hunger of a man who had fasted for hours. He had not tasted the food which had been brought up stairs to him. Now, when he began to drink Marr's fiery wines, they found a brain that was not quite in its normal condition, and its already inflamed cells gave them a ready welcome.

Beverly could not drink. His heart was too heavy. He tried to pull himself together, to say that this was one of the adventures of life, that he had a capital story in his hand; but his professional pride and zeal were melting under the memory of a pure girl's face, the face of a girl whom he had a right to suspect, but whom he was ready to sacrifice his very life to protect. She had hardly spoken to him, but Beverly was not the sort of man to whom a woman appealed through her intellect.

Boris took glass after glass of wine with the heavy food he was eating, and each glass sent the mercury of his temperament a notch higher; and he was one who needed no stimulants. The imp of perverseness seemed to enter into him, and he became more and more the swash-

buckler count of the hills. He insisted upon talking politics and criticising the actions of the king. He asked where Lubona was, and laughed at him for a fanatic, a member of a decaying family which did not know its own best interests.

"We must have progress," he said. "We must advance. Can we do it alone? Never! We must join Russia. Boris must give the country into the hands of Russia, and let us unite with that great country which will eventually rule the world."

Beverly shivered as he listened. It seemed to his disgusted sense that Marr, with all his shrewdness, must see through this extravaganza, this piece of child's play. But apparently he did not.

"Would you help Russia to take Carpathia?" he asked, pouring out another glass of wine.

"Why not?" Boris returned. "Wouldn't my pigs have a better market? But there is nobody in Carpathia with nerve enough to start such a movement. They went as far as

possible when Boris was put on the throne. They will do nothing more."

"But," Marr objected, "I have heard of such a movement. I know some men who are ready to fight for that end. They see the best interests of their country in uniting it with a powerful monarchy which can bring in the light of civilization."

"And can develop its mineral resources," Boris said. "I have some mines, or some hills that would be mines if I could find a company that would take the risks in this wilderness."

For a moment Marr had a gleam of suspicion in his eye, but evidently his dealings with other men had made him expect a ready greed.

"There is a great field for adventure in a political upheaval," he said. "A man may go into it with nothing and come out with fame and fortune. The world would be a humdrum place were it not for these ardent corners;" and he looked at Beverly.

"Where can I find this company of wise

men?" Boris asked. "Let me go to them. I would join their forces tonight."

"Would you?" Marr leaned over the table toward the king. "Then you may. I am going to meet one of them in a few hours. Come with me, and you shall hear all of their plans. Are you in earnest? Can you fight?"

"Try me," Boris said, swinging his long, glass in his hand. "And my friend here, the American, will come as well, and win fame and fortune."

"Mr. Hardin is the son of my old friend, the son of a brave man. I know that he will be an addition to any force which is fighting in a good cause."

Boris sprang to his feet, and lifted his freshly filled glass. "Here's to the new Carpathia!"

Beverly rose to his own feet, and put his arm in that of the king.

"We must make preparations if we leave tonight," he said, and gave a meaning glance at Marr, which was returned with one full of intelligence.

"The horses shall be ready," Marr promised.

Beverly fairly dragged Boris from the table and up the stairs, and threw him upon the bed, where he lay laughing.

"I do not understand why I should fight for you, or work for you," he said angrily to the king. "You are apparently incapable of realizing a serious condition."

"Do you call it a serious condition, then, when a monarch conspires against himself?" Boris lay on the bed with his flushed face on his hands, his elbows supporting them. "You listen to the nonsense of a jealous girl who wants to get Lubona into trouble, and you let your American imagination work. I am going to find out all about the insurrection of Mr. John Marr, and send my guards to capture the whole revolution. I am going out with him tonight. You may come or not, as you like."

"You know I must come; but first I am going to tell Marr that I have heard that he is in danger from Lubona."

"And that I am the king?"

"No."

"What do you care about Marr?"

"We are not going to that rendezvous to-night," Beverly said firmly. "You are going to go back to your castle, and I am going to stay here. I believe that when Lubona finds that his big fish has slipped through his fingers, and that you are able to punish him, he will fly the country. You can deal with Marr. But I do not believe that all three of us can get away. I believe that the castle is surrounded. The girl said it would be." He went to the window and looked out. There was nothing but darkness. Presumably that sentinel was still under the ivy.

Boris straightened himself. "I can give my own orders. I am going to that rendezvous with Marr. You may stay here if you choose, but unless you intend to take Marr into your confidence I would advise you to pretend to start. He might be at a loss to understand why you wished to stay here when 'important business' is calling you to Carpath. You cannot very well explain that you want to save his daughter from Lubona—the owner of the castle, her own old friend whom

she met at a Washington dinner party. I think you will have a task on your hands."

Boris took the little scarf from his head, and, folding it up, put it safely away, not in the place where he had found it, but inside his tunic, while Beverly pretended not to see him.

"You should have gone long ago," the American said.

"Allow me to judge my own actions;" but the remark was made with gaiety. "I can take care of myself."

The king rapidly prepared himself for riding, and then Beverly started down stairs to see if Marr's preparations were made. As he came out upon the landing, a door opened, and Elinor Marr stood in it. Her face was full of agitation.

"Mr. Hardin," she said, "are you going away?"

"I am going down to meet your father."

"I know it. He goes away every night to see the workmen in some mines, I believe. Is—Count Festin going?"

"And suppose he were?"

"Please do not take him away. You are an American gentleman, and the son of my father's old friend, and I am going to speak to you frankly. I promised Count Lubona that Count Festin should not leave the house before his return. Is he an old friend of yours?"

"Not very."

She clasped her hands together. "I cannot tell you why. It has something to do with the king and the state of the country. I know you will sympathize with them. They are trying to keep the country from being sold to Russia. That cruel, dreadful tyranny is trying to take their freedom away from them. This Count Festin does not know what he is doing, but he is helping Russia in some way. It was so lucky that he was brought here when he was hurt. We thought we could keep him out of mischief for a time."

"Perhaps Count Lubona thought it was lucky that he was hurt," Beverly said with meaning.

She pulled the portière closer around her, and shrank back a little, as though she would disdain to listen to such a suggestion. "I thought you would be interested in a people's struggle for freedom," she said.

"I am, when they know what freedom is. Why do you not take your father into your confidence?"

"He thinks the country should belong to Russia. He is a business man."

"And you will go against his interests for—Count Lubona?"

"Not for Count Lubona," she said proudly, "but for a free Carpathia. I have promised to do what I can for their cause. You are an American gentleman, and will understand. The cause will be helped by keeping Count Festin here for a day or two where he cannot communicate with the king."

"Ah!" said Beverly. He leaned against the carved railing and thought. Evidently she was in no danger from Lubona, but it was vitally necessary that Boris should get back to Carpath as speedily as possible. He was

away, and there were men there to seize the government.

"I will try to keep Count Festin from going with your father," he said.

"I knew you would understand, although Count Lubona said that you would not." Her cheeks and eyes burned with enthusiasm. She lost the years which the long gown had given her, and she lost, too, that shadow of suspicion which had hung over her in Beverly's mind; but he cursed Lubona for entangling this young girl in his schemes and plots. She was, if possible, to entrap her own father. Lubona had made her think that she might even convert this Count Festin, the king's friend, to their cause. The ignorance of a young girl seemed fair play to the Carpathian plotter.

Boris opened the door of the bed room, and started down the stairs. He stopped and held out his hand to Miss Marr.

"Your father and I are going off for a ride," he said. "Wish us luck!"

Beverly turned away with disgust in his

heart. It seemed to him that none of these men, not even the king, knew how to honor and respect a woman. Boris, as well as Lubona, was ready to ruin the girl's father, and yet he was asking her good wishes on the venture. Half way down the stairs Beverly stopped and gave a disagreeable laugh.

"And how much better am I?" he asked himself. "I am here to betray and ruin John Marr, and yet I am trying my best to make friends with his daughter."

He went forward half a dozen steps and put a heavy hand on the king's shoulder.

"Sir," he said, "I have just heard from Miss Marr that Lubona left orders that you were to be kept here until his return. He has told her that you are a friend of the king's, and an enemy to free Carpathia. As it seems to be in order to betray her confidence, I also am doing it. I promised to try to keep you from going with her father. I am keeping my word."

Boris' face took on a heavy gravity which Beverly had not seen there before.

"I will go. I should have known that the situation was serious. I expected to keep Lubona here. Will you ride with me?"

"If we can get out," Beverly said significantly. "I think that the best plan would be to decline to go with Marr on account of your inability to ride, and then go out through the stable as we planned."

"No. This way we shall be sure of starting with good horses under us."

They found Marr walking up and down the hall uneasily and in a fever of impatience. He led the way quickly to the stable, where the horses were saddled and waiting. Beverly's suspicions all came back when he saw that each horse's head was held by a Carpathian groom. It seemed an attention which was hardly necessary. He managed to put his own aside, and to come last before the stable door, which was narrow.

Marr went out first, looking in the moonlight like some grim knight of another day. Boris' horse started after him, but its head was hardly outside the door when there was a shot,

and Marr's voice called loudly, "Look out for the king!"

The two grooms had rushed out, Boris' horse was pushed back on its haunches, and the heavy door was swung shut, leaving the two young men in the narrow stone courtyard sitting on their horses.

"He knew that I was the king!" was Boris' exclamation.

Beverly swung himself down from his horse in angry impatience.

"He knew I was the king," Boris repeated; and then the ridiculousness of his situation struck him, and he laughed loudly. "Is this a game of hide and seek?" he asked.

"It is a game which is going to deprive you of a throne," the American returned. "We were a pair of fools to trust that man, or to believe for an instant that he did not know you. He must have his plans perfectly matured to have told you of them tonight, and then——"

"Shut me out—or in. Your countryman appears to have a pretty wit."

Beverly left his horse standing, and went over to the stable door of which the girl had told him. As she had said, it bolted on the inside. It took him only an instant to pull back the heavy bars of iron, although they had rusted from long disuse. His heart jumped as each one gave way before him. After all, they might have one chance of getting out into the open. He felt that if that could only be brought about all would go well. As his strong muscles answered the call upon them, he felt in himself the energy of ten men. He could fight through anything, and he would.

An iron handle was fastened against the door, for use in drawing it open, and as the last bolt fell Beverly grasped this and pulled. To his surprise it yielded, and came slowly open on rusty hinges. He had scarcely hoped for this, in his heart.

He found himself looking into blackness. The stable was lighted by two lanterns hung up against the sides of the stone wall, but their rather feeble light did not extend here. He

started to take one down, and then, instead, he ran swiftly to them and put both of them out.

"What are you doing?" Boris asked angrily. He had dismounted from his own horse, and was investigating the stable. He found every door locked.

"If these people are still outside, I do not want them to see that we have found an open way. The light will tell."

"If it was going to tell, it has carried its message already. These doors are all locked. We are rats in a trap. We are confined to this one room to await the arrival of any man who chooses to come and pick us off through some peephole. Ah, well, the fortunes of war!" And he sat down on an overturned feed box against which he had stumbled.

"They won't do very accurate picking off in darkness," Beverly returned. The air of the night blew in, and he wondered why the moonlight did not show here. He supposed that clouds and the thick fir trees were responsible.

"Are we to mount our horses and ride out," Boris asked, "to be shot down outside instead of inside? I suppose it is immaterial, except that outside we *may* get away. I should judge from what our kind host said that he does not wish to compass my death. He expressly requested them to 'look out for the king.'"

"I am going to try that way for a little distance," Beverly said. "You stay here. Shut the door after me, and if anything happens, or if I do not return, bar the door again and see what you can do to protect yourself. There is a small door here which runs by a secret passage into the house. Get to that, and see what Miss Marr will do to help you."

"That breed is all alike, I suppose," Boris said contemptuously. For all his bravado, his heart was sick within him. He could not forgive himself for his foolhardiness in letting his neck run into this noose. Like most people ready to play a doubtful game, he was full of anger to find himself checkmated, and ready to declare everybody else base and guilty of double dealing because he was the loser.

"Miss Marr is a good woman, and if you say anything more about her I will crack your head, and leave you to attend to your own affairs," Beverly said hotly. But as he spoke he knew that he would not leave Boris to attend to his own perils. Implanted in the heart of strong men is that loyalty to a cause they have once taken up which becomes a passion in disaster. The representative of that cause may be weak and contemptible, as the Stuarts of old were, but his character has no effect upon his adherents; or, rather, the weaker and more in need of help he is, the more surely is he able to call upon the strength of other men. Beverly had been fairly forced into this contest, but now that he was in it, it possessed his soul.

"You have no need to crack my head. It is pretty nearly finished," Boris said good naturedly. "I was only expecting Miss Marr to be filial. I have always heard that Americans are enterprising, and clever at carrying their own ends, but I believe I prefer a regard for hospitality."

"Shut the door after me," Beverly said, "but do not bar it. I may want to rush back. I will call."

He felt his way out into the darkness. It did seem unaccountably black. He wondered at once what would happen if a pit were dug near by to trap him, or if one of the guards were to meet him and run a knife through him. It would all be so easy. But in Beverly's heart there were no coward suggestions that after all this was no fight of his, that he had no need to imperil himself. He was helping a country and king to what he believed was the best thing for them.

Boris had been his careless, good natured friend, and he was lending him a hand in an emergency. But that was not his deepest reason. In his heart was a hatred of Lubona which dominated him. It seemed to him that he had always hated the man, that he had been born hating him. The Carpathian count should be brought to confusion at any cost; and again, John Marr must not be allowed to bring his revolution to a head. Beverly's own

newspaper story would lose its dramatic interest. But something had come in ahead of that—a new and mad desire to protect Elinor Marr at all hazards. If possible, she must never know what her father had tried to do.

All this was in his mind, making a motive power as he moved forward. In two seconds he had put his hand against a stone wall. He let it rub along for a dozen steps, and then realized that he was in a passage or alleyway. He looked up, and could see that the fir branches were above the wall, for there was a faint glimmer of sky, and the smell of the open.

He took his pistol in his hand, and crept slowly along. Once he thought he heard a sound, but it appeared to be only the mournful singing of the wind through the wet firs. He must have walked at least a hundred yards when he suddenly came to the end of the wall and put his hand on a tree trunk. He was in the fir wood at last. He did not know which way to turn. It was pitchy dark, and the place appeared to be entirely deserted.

.

Probably they had not thought this place worth guarding. He would go back and get Boris. They could lead their horses out here, get into the fir wood, and away to Carpeth.

The ground under Beverly's feet was covered with short grass, and soundless. He had come on with every caution, and had moved noiselessly, but as he put his hand on the trunk of the tree a flake of bark fell to the ground. It must have struck a stone or a bit of wood, for it made a slight noise. Instantly a voice and the click of a firearm responded. Beverly held himself rigid. How he wished that he could speak Carpathian! But he listened no less intently, and stored the words in his memory; for in a sentence or two the name of Elinor Marr was spoken.

There were two men, and evidently one was asking the other concerning the noise. Apparently the other assured him that it was some sound of the night and the wood. Then, as if they had just met, or had found something to say after a long silence, they began

to speak in their strange language. It was about as difficult to remember as any meaningless string of words, but Beverly had trained his memory in a hard school. He had often written out long interviews with public men where he had been obliged to dispense with a notebook entirely, and at times when the misplacement of a word might have had serious consequences. He put his whole attention upon the words as he heard them, and when he felt that he could remember no more, he slipped back the way he had come, and called softly to Boris to open the door. He found that energetic young man with the lantern candle in his hand, trying all the doors over again.

"Come here," Beverly said. "You understand Carpathian. What does this mean?" And he repeated word for word the rigmarole in which Elinor Marr's name had appeared. It was as "Marr's daughter" that they had spoken of her, "daughter" being like the German word, which he knew.

Boris translated at once.

“‘We are to leave Marr’s daughter in the castle alone. She will suspect nothing. She will make a fair bride for any man.’ That’s simple. They were merely complimenting her,” he said. “Of course they were to leave her in the castle, and of course she will make a fair bride.”

But Beverly looked at him with eyes in which stern determination shone.

“I shall not go away from here and leave that girl,” he said, his lips close together. “You may do exactly what you choose. I shall go back into the castle, tell her the situation, and take her away with me. We can get out of that window somehow, and the guard there is bound under the ivy bush.”

“But may I ask how you expect to get into the house again? We are fastened up here in this stone stable, which might as well be a dungeon. Every door is secured. I think we may as well take this outlet you have discovered. We can fight two men if my head does ache;” and Boris put a hand to his bandages.

"I am not going to leave Miss Marr."

"Her father hadn't many scruples."

"He thought her safe. He did not realize the nature of these barbarians."

Beverly walked over to the oak door, through whose peepholes he had looked a very few hours before, and tried it. It was hidden behind harness and saddles, which had been hung over it, and had chanced to leave the peepholes on the other side uncovered. He pulled the trappings down, and in a few minutes was at work on the door. It was stout enough, but evidently it had not been considered, for with a little skilful work it was opened.

Beverly took one of the lanterns, and sent the king ahead into the passage. As he started in himself, he heard the sound of a footstep behind him, and turned just in time to see a great Carpathian flying through the outside door, which he had neglected to fasten.

"Run!" he called to Boris, and turned in the passage. The Carpathian held a knife in his hand, which he was about to throw into

the darkness of the passage. Two sounds stopped its flight. One was the Carpathian word for "king," and the other was the crack of Beverly's revolver.

The first came from a second Carpathian, who had followed the knife thrower. The bullet from the revolver broke the bone of the man's wrist, and let the knife fall harmlessly to the floor; but neither man stopped. They rushed to the little door, determined at all hazards not to let the two prisoners escape, although they could hardly have known, Beverly reasoned, of this secret passage, nor could they have realized that the fugitives were going back into the castle.

Now it was that the peepholes which Beverly had so carefully located came into use. The Carpathians must be very close, for they were tugging at the door. He put his pistol to a hole and fired. He heard a groan and a fall; then he fired into the other hole. There was deep and complete silence. Beverly made a foolhardy resolve to go back and bar that outer door, and had opened the door before

him a tiny crack, when he felt Boris' hand on his arm.

"Don't be hasty," the young king said. "The other man is probably standing there to kill us. Let us make a dash for it. They evidently do not want to kill me exactly in this way, and they will be afraid to shoot after us. Come on."

And together they ran down the narrow passage, and as he ran Beverly thought. The chest was before the door into the passage, and they would be obliged to call a servant to let them out. It was altogether likely that the servants inside had been bought as surely as those outside.

"Hark," Boris said, when they reached the other end of the passage. "What is that?"

It was the sound of the piano, and Elinor Marr's voice singing.

"Heaven grant she is there alone, and is not singing to that cur Lubona," the king went on.

"If he had returned, his horse would have been brought around to the stable," Beverly

remarked. "We must get out of here before he does come;" and he knocked softly on the door behind the tapestry. He kept up a regular rat-tat for some time before there was any response, and then the piano suddenly stopped. Elinor seemed to be listening.

"It will probably frighten her to death, and she will call half the servants in the house, and scream," Boris said, "or think it is spirits. Most women are fools."

"You may have to rely upon one to get you out of this mess, fool or no fool," Beverly returned.

An hour or two earlier, he had been ready to consider Boris a trifle over the most serious things in life, because he seemed ready to forget all to dally over the songs of this beautiful girl. Now Beverly was angry with him because in his own troubles he seemed to lose all sight of her. But this last state of mind left him more at ease. Boris indifferent, impatient, was less to be considered as a rival than Boris philandering; and it had come to this, that every man was a rival in Beverly's

eyes. Had the passage been lighted, he might have seen a humorous understanding of the fact in his companion's black eyes.

"I suppose she will let us out. Pound away," the king said.

Elinor sat at the piano for a moment, her head raised, and then she rose and went into the hall. She had no thought that the knocking came from any one except Lubona, and she wondered why he came back in that way. She had decided that Beverly had broken his promise not to let Count Festin go away with her father, and did not expect to see them again. She wanted to meet Lubona, to explain her failure to keep her charge safe; and when she heard the sound that always means a waiting, she ran at once to let him in. But as she neared the great door of the entrance the noise retreated behind her. She did not know the castle very well, even yet, and as she entered the old hall she looked vaguely about for a door. Then again came the knocking from behind the chest. She stopped, timid.

"What is it?" she asked.

Beverly answered.

"Can you pull the chest away from the tapestry? Count Festin and I missed our way from the stables;" and then he added, in an undertone to Boris, "She can never do it alone."

But her muscles were better trained than he imagined, and with one or two tugs of her handsome, strong bare arms, the big chest moved aside and the door opened.

"You see I kept my promise," Beverly said under his breath as he thanked her.

Her delight at seeing them was perfectly naïve and girlish.

"What a curious way to come from the stables! How did you know of the passage there?"

"You may not know it, Miss Marr," Boris said gravely, "but you have an antiquarian for a guest. Mr. Hardin has a mania for old houses, and secret paths, and that sort of thing. He has done nothing but worry me about the dungeons you might possibly have,

and at last he brought me into that rat trap."

"Miss Marr," Beverly began bluntly, "I am very sorry to be obliged to tell you that Count Lubona is your father's enemy. He has surrounded this house, intending to keep us all prisoners. Your father has escaped, and will probably bring help. (Now, may Heaven forgive me for that lie!) It is of paramount importance that Count Festin and I should reach Carpath at the earliest possible moment. Will you come with us?"

"Why should I go with you?" she asked proudly.

"Because—pardon me—it is dangerous for you here. These Carpathians are half barbarous, at least in this part of the country. You would be here alone. Indeed, if you will not come with us, we must stay with you, and it will be a very serious loss to Count Festin."

"But Count Lubona said——"

"Lubona is your father's enemy. Pardon me, but he is using you—your kindness to his

country—to make you false to your father's interests. If we wait here until he returns, we shall be in a situation which must result most unpleasantly for some of us." Beverly spoke gravely and rapidly. Boris, looking at her keenly, saw Elinor hanging upon the young man's confident words. They were all standing. "The reason we came through this secret passage is because we were imprisoned in the stables, and this passage was supposed to be unknown to us."

"How did you know it?"

"It was told to me—by a woman."

"What woman—one of the servants?"

"I suppose so," he said lamely.

"Well, Mr. Hardin, you and Count Festin are at perfect liberty to go, if you can. I know that Count Lubona did not wish Count Festin to leave this house." She looked at him firmly. "Nor do I. He is an enemy to free Carpathia. If Count Lubona has tried to prevent his going, I find him only justified in doing so. I am glad if he has succeeded."

She turned on her heel, and went back into

the drawing room as though the subject were entirely ended. But Beverly followed her at once.

"Miss Marr," he said, "you must come to Carpeth;" and his voice was full of authority. "Your individual opinions make a matter in which I shall not presume to meddle, but you are in danger here. Lubona might take care of you, but he is not here. If he can be prevented, he will never come here again. You are at the mercy of these barbarians, and I shall not leave you in peril."

"Then let yourself and Count Festin stay."

"That we cannot do. It is Count Festin's duty to go. You are going with us. I insist upon it. There is no other way."

If anybody had ever told Beverly that he would bully a woman, he would have rejected the idea with scorn; but he felt now that he was coming perilously near it. He put out his hand, and she arose to her feet.

"How do you know that the place is surrounded?"

"Because we were attacked when we tried

to go," he explained patiently. "We may be killed here, and you left alone. We shall take you into Carpeth."

"But if I will not go?"

Then was Beverly brutal in earnest. Even while his face was white, his eye did not quail.


"Is Lubona your accepted lover? Will you marry him?" he asked.

She sprang up, furious. "How dare you ask me such a question?"

"Because we were warned by a woman who is jealous of you," he said, looking back into her scarlet face. "Because you are considered as his bride; because in Carpathia it is not always necessary that a woman should consent to marry a man."

"Hush, hush!" she said, and put the back of her hand over her eyes, while her face grew red and then white. Beverly, giving up all hope of ever finding favor in her eyes, sure that this humiliation would sever her from him forever, stood there miserable.

"I will go with you," she said.



IX.

AFTER Elinor had gone up stairs, walking slowly, almost like one who moved without her own volition, Boris turned to the American.

"May I ask," he said, "how you purpose taking Miss Marr away with us? How are we to depart? Are we to open the front door and go out into the wood hand in hand, like a modern version of the old fairy tale, or how?"

"I am going back to the stable for three horses."

Boris had seated himself on the chest which had stood before the door, and when Beverly was not looking he had several times put his hand to his head. It ached with a pain that sickened and bewildered him, and which the wine he had drunk with Marr, and the excitement of the supper, had done much to augment.

But Boris was made of plucky stuff, and was not ready to acknowledge himself at the mercy of any bodily foe. Sickness meant weakness, and to his suspicious nature weakness meant that he was prey. But a hard headache, following a shock, wears upon the nerves of any man. Deep circles had settled about his black eyes, and as he moved his hands there was a more quivering gleam from the heavy stones that adorned them than an ordinary change of light would warrant.

"And do you propose to go out of that alleyway with Miss Marr? Going to put her on your horse? Another case of 'then light to the crupper the fair maid he swung,' eh? I'd put her in front, if I were you. She'd make an admirable shield."

But Beverly paid no attention. As he walked away, Boris called after him, "Are you going to bring the horses through the house?"

"That is exactly what I am going to do," Beverly returned, as he walked away. He knew his own plans perfectly now, and that

good American revolver was in his hand. An older man might probably have asked Miss Marr to go with him, to let her servants show him the way and bring the horses out; but Beverly had arrived at a stage where he felt that the universe was cleared for his action.

He did not know how to get back to the stables by way of the house, and in three minutes he had decided that the only thing to do was to go back by way of the passage under the stairs, with an axe in his hand to batter down the stout oaken doors. An axe is not always at hand in the usual gentleman's dwelling, but fortunately Lubona's ancestral line went back into the days when Carpathians carried battle axes, and he had some of those stout, honest weapons still hanging on his walls. Beverly took down one of them, and went back into the passage, a lantern swinging from his arm. He listened when he came to the door into the stables, but there was only dead silence. Pushing the unfastened door open, he went in.

Back in the hall Boris sat with his head on his hand, his tired brain whirling. He felt ready to give up everything, for the moment. He was full of disgust with himself. It seemed to him that he had only the empty shell of everything; that perverse nature, in making him a light jester at life, had also played an unkind practical joke upon him, and had given him only the husks of every good thing. She teased him with visions of what might be, leading him on and on, only to find that there never was anything real or good or substantial for him.

He was practically an illegitimate child, born of a morganatic marriage. He was brought up in the most splendid court on earth, as a member of the royal household, and yet he was a nameless beggar, a mere pawn to be moved here and there at a capricious will. He had given, hardly his heart, but all his boyish loyalty, which he thought was his life's passion, and which would doubtless have grown to be such, to a woman who had sent him to this throne. Not long ago he had

learned that she had deserted him, to make a proper marriage with a man of proper rank and wealth.

"I should never have come into the world," he said bitterly. "I was, I am, the representative of a broken law. But now that I am here, I should be strong enough to take matters into my own hands, and to fit events to my own pleasure."

Jest as he might, slur as he liked, Boris, the man, had seen the woman who seemed to make it worth his while to be a man; and, with a hopelessness born of a despairing experience, he was seeing her won by another man. He was trying to pretend that she was nothing to him, but trying unsuccessfully. The savage loomed in his heart. Why should he be denied all things? His head was sunken on his breast; his eyes, for once, were fastened on the floor, dull and full of gloom.

He heard Elinor Marr coming down the steps and toward him, but he did not look up until she stood before him. There was pity in her eyes as she looked down at Boris. She

had put on a short, dark dress of blue serge, with a small round hat on her head, which brought back all her girlishness, and seemingly some timidity, as she spoke.

"You are ill," she said. "What can I do for you?"

She ran to a table in the drawing room, and brought back a bottle of smelling salts, which she held out. Boris took it gingerly, hating the stuff, yet grateful.

"Where is Mr. Hardin?" she asked, looking about.

"He has gone after the horses." Boris smiled a little. "I believe he contemplates bringing them back through your drawing room, and taking them out of the front door. He is determined to take us both away from here."

She rose from the seat she had taken and walked across the floor nervously.

"Count Festin," she said, "how soon do you think my father will return?"

"That I cannot tell," he replied gravely. "When he went away I believe he did not

intend to return for some hours." Boris' heavy head was causing him to lose the thread of the story he had been telling.

"Some hours! You said that he escaped; that he would come with help for you."

"Ah, he evidently went to his mine, or whatever it is, after help. I imagined that it was some distance away."

Elinor was impatient to be gone, and walked back and forth nervously. It had grown late, and the servants seemed to have retired. She went into the dining room, brought back a tray with biscuits and wine, and put it before Boris. There was something in his sick, boyish face which touched her, for she broke out all at once:

"You are a Carpathian; why do you make trouble? Why are you not all *good* men, and all for a free Carpathia?"

"Evidently Beverly has made her consider Lubona something beside a 'good man,' which fires one shot in the battle," Boris thought with a weary satisfaction. It takes but one bold turn of the right handle to shake up the

whole kaleidoscope of a woman's mind. "I am not a Carpathian," he said. He was tired of masquerading, particularly under the name that Lubona had given him.

"Then what have you to do with it?" She started to speak Lubona's name, but evidently the wound Beverly had given her was too recent. "I have heard that you are not for a free Carpathia."

"No. I am merely a friend to Boris, and a loyal friend, I hope," he laughed. "Sometimes I have doubts upon that subject, but I certainly am not one of those who would take service near his person to betray him."

"No! No!" she said. She looked so beautiful, she came so close to him, they two practically alone in the dead of night in that house, that Boris felt for a moment a sense of protection which astonished him, which was foreign to all his nature. The wide generosities toward women had never been taught to him. He had never known them enough even to blame his father that he had left his son penniless because that son's mother had

not been a legal wife. It had been unpleasant, but from his point of view it was entirely natural.

Perhaps his new feeling might not have lasted; it was only an idea which passed for an instant through his mind, and possessed him; but before it was entirely gone there was a queer sound in the house, and Beverly came leading a saddled horse through the rooms. It was a strange enough sight, but not so out of keeping as it might have been. Doubtless horses had passed through those halls many times in the history of the castle.

"I had some trouble getting back," Beverly said cheerfully. "I had to batter down two or three doors, but Count Lubona should have taken the wear and tear on his house into consideration when he shut us up in it." He probably would have used Marr's name if his daughter had been absent.

He had muffled the horse's feet, so that they made little noise on the solid oak, and the animal stood there meekly, as if an ancestral hall was no unusual sight. Beverly put the

bridle into Boris' hand and started back, but the king arose to his feet.

"Let me go," he said; but even as he spoke he fell back in his seat, his face ghastly.

"He will not be able to go with us," Elinor cried, but Beverly put a glass of wine to his lips and held it there.

"He must go," the American said.

She flashed back at him. "Why is it so necessary for him to go?"

Beverly wanted to say, "Because he is the King of Carpathia, and your father has aided Lubona in keeping him here." He felt reckless. He believed that after he had shown her Lubona's worthlessness, she could never forgive him, and he wanted to put all hope away from him; but he could not hurt her. He made no answer, but ran back after the other horses.

He had found that the door at the further end of the passage opened upon a court, and this in turn led into the principal stables. As they gave upon the inclosed court, these inner doors were seldom locked, and Beverly knew

that the grooms must sleep above. He was very cautious, after he had made noise enough to waken the dead by chopping off the lock of the door from the house stable into the court ; but as there was no stirring, he concluded that the servants were outside doing duty as guards. He had disabled three of them, and he did not know then how many more there might be.

He had gone into the principal stables and taken his pick of the horses for Miss Marr, getting a beautiful little chestnut which he rightly imagined to be her own riding horse. He could find no muffling for the little mare's feet, and he went back to the other stables to find some towels which he had seen there, and to get out the other horse. As he finished swathing the hoofs, and took up the bridles, he heard a sound at the outer door. Men, more than one or two, were coming rapidly down the stone alleyway, leading a horse. They were talking excitedly. The door was securely barred, and Beverly lifted his head and listened.

One voice was speaking Carpathian, and Beverly knew the sounds well enough, now, to know that it was a peasant who spoke. He almost held his breath to hear the answer. When it came, he recognized at once the smooth, polished tones of Lubona. For an instant he started to go; then he took his revolver up and fired it straight at the door, once, twice.

"Any way, that will give them something to think about," he said grimly.

Then he took the bridles of the horses, and trotted them through the house into the hall where Boris and Miss Marr were. He found her standing by Boris, a cushion behind his head, bathing his forehead in some cooling lotion. The sight went like a pang to Beverly's heart.

"We must get out at once," he said. "Lubona is at the back of the house. Come;" and he took Elinor Marr's arm, turned her around, and half lifted her into the saddle.

Boris staggered to his feet, and went toward his horse. He had desired only to be

left there, with Elinor Marr bathing his head. Thrones might fall, and kingdoms be lost, it was all one to him. But Beverly's spirit moved him, and he followed.

The American threw open the doors, and the three horses rushed out into the night.

X.

IF there were any guards in this part of the grounds they made no sign, and in five minutes the three were nearing the covered bridge over the little stream which Boris and Beverly had crossed that afternoon. The American felt that the hardest part of their journey would be over when this was passed. The river must be crossed before they could reach Carpeth, and this seemed to be the simplest place at which to make the attempt. Once Beverly turned and looked back at Lubona's castle.

"I wish," he said to himself, "that that old fox would come back, and that he and Lubona would eat each other up like two hungry wolves. That would be a solution of the whole question."

He was young and in love, and although he had said to himself that his case was entirely

hopeless now that he had wounded Elinor's pride, still he could not entirely banish the vision of what might be. That his dream was built on the probable death of two men did not make it any the less sweet to him. In his sturdy heart he thought they both ought to die. Men, even good men, are not so far from the primitive state as writers upon Christian civilization would have us believe. The life in Carpathia had not been one to cause Beverly to think of the ways of conventionality. He had decided to make a heroic sacrifice. He was going to give up the opportunity of his life, and let this story of John Marr's unsuccessful conspiracy go unrecorded—if they succeeded in making it unsuccessful—because he cared for the old schemer's daughter.

They reached the bridge and halted for an instant.

"There is but one thing to do," Beverly said. "It is growing lighter. The moon is coming out from the clouds again, and it will not be long until daybreak. We must keep

close together, and make a rush for it across the bridge."

Beverly took the bridle of the little chestnut mare in his hand, and with the girl between them they rushed through the bridge. There was not a sound except the echo of their own horses' feet on the boards. At least, at first they heard no other sound than this and the foaming river; but in a moment all three drew rein and listened. Coming behind them were galloping hoofs.

They were at the turn of the road.

"Let us go up the other way," Boris said. "That is Lubona, and he will certainly follow along the road toward Carpeth."

Elinor spoke at once, and now there was anxiety in her tone. Evidently she was intensely afraid of being overtaken by Lubona now.

"He will imagine that we would reason in that way," she said. "Any one would. Let us hide in the trees until he gets by, and then follow the road he does not take."

Without a word Beverly pushed his horse

toward the hillside. He remembered that it was not so steep here, but rose in a series of natural terraces up which a clever footed horse could easily zigzag.

"Wait," he said, as his horse stumbled. He dismounted and led the animal, feeling for a sure and easy footing. Elinor and Boris came quickly after him. It was still so dark that it was only necessary to get out of the narrow road. Boris also dismounted, and each man held his hand over the nostrils of his horse, that the animal might not betray them. A foot stamp would have been enough. But each of them stood silent as statues.

When the party of horsemen came to the end of the bridge, they were evidently puzzled. They had expected to be guided by the sounds on the road.

"It is heavy soil here, wet after the rain. They must be going slowly," Lubona said.

"But which road?" asked a man.

"Both. Four of you go in one direction, and three will come this way with me. Whatever you do, do not harm the young lady.

She is to be brought safely back under any circumstances."

Beverly could understand but one word of this, and that was the allusion to Miss Marr. Even if he had not known, he would have guessed it, by the slight movement she made. To her, and to Beverly had he fully understood, the sentences were sinister, but to Boris they meant only that Lubona, like himself, saw in Marr's daughter the weapon which could be held over her father's head. But he knew too much, now, to mention that fact. After the men had gone, he literally translated the sentence to Beverly.

"There is nothing for us to do but to climb this hill and come down on the other side. It may take us some time, but they will not readily suspect us of having tried it. I know the road on the other side," Boris went on. Neither of his companions noticed how weak his voice sounded. They had seen him pass so rapidly from mood to mood that they could hardly tell what was natural to him. "We must get to Carpeth as speedily as possible."

It was constantly growing lighter. The sun, still hidden, but already sending heralds of its coming up into the sky, was melting the clouds around the paling moon, and letting its feeble light show at last. But it was by no means easy to climb that wooded hillside. Presently they found that there was nothing to do but to walk and lead their horses, and as they advanced Boris more and more lagged behind. Elinor kept close to him. She seemed to be constrained so long as Beverly's eyes were on her face. He had shamed her, and she could not forget it.

They had reached the top of the mountain, which was not very high here, and found a tableland which dipped here and there into ravines running down to the valley below. Beverly waited until Boris came near, and then spoke to him.

"Do you know any way down from here by which we can reach a road to Carpath? We do not want to go by the most frequented way, because that will be watched. We must get there within a few hours."

Boris did not answer, but sat wearily down on the grass.

"Let him rest for a moment," Elinor said, without looking at Beverly. "He is completely worn out. Have you any brandy?"

She turned to speak to the king, and gave a cry of fear and dismay. Beverly, who had turned to his horse to get a brandy flask from a pocket in his saddle, started at the sound, expecting to see Lubona, at least. What he saw was the king lying back unconscious on the ground, a stream of blood running down his face. The exertion had set the wound in his head to bleeding again, and had at last overcome him. Elinor had his head on her arm in an instant, and was stanching the flow of blood with her pocket handkerchief.

"There must be help somewhere," she said. "Oh, we cannot let him die here! It was madness for you to let him start." With pure womanly logic, she took the ready attitude that it was all Beverly's fault. Of course she could not blame the disabled man, and certainly not herself.

Beverly looked about the landscape, as if he expected to find help springing out of the ground somewhere. His search was rewarded by seeing the smoke from a hut some little distance away. He ran toward it.

"Suppose they do know him," he said. "We can only try to save his life. We appear to have come to first principles at last."

He had often seen the outside of these little Carpathian huts, with their byre for the pigs, but as he came nearer he noticed that this was one of the most squalid, little more than a byre itself. It was evidently the temporary lodging of some herder of the pigs who were allowed to run in the forest. To Beverly's relief the man, an alert looking peasant boy, hardly more than a child, was standing by the door. The American forgot, for an instant, that the lad probably could not understand him, and ran up to him speaking German; but it was with genuine surprise that he heard the young peasant answer him in the same tongue.

"Ah, you can actually speak," he cried delightedly.

"My mother belongs over yonder," the boy returned. "I tend our own pigs. I am not a herder to other men."

"I have a sick man here, very ill," Beverly said. "Will you come and help me bring him here until he is better?"

After Boris had been put into the rude bunk in the wall, which was all the hut had to offer, and Beverly had broiled a bit of ham over the fire for his breakfast and that of the girl, he began to think of the best thing to do. Boris must have medical attendance as soon as possible.

"There was once a time," Beverly said to himself, "when it was of more importance to die than to give up a throne; but life has more delights than it once held, and giving up this throne appears to bear no very serious consequences."

After he had made Boris as comfortable as possible, and had barred the one door of the hut to the best of his ability—which was small, with the materials at hand—he gave Boris' revolver into Miss Marr's hand, and told

her that he must go, first asking her if she would go with him.

"I cannot leave this sick man," she said.
"I am not afraid."

"I will return at the first possible moment, and take you into Carpeth. I must take this boy with me to show me the road. I might find it myself, and I might not. Besides, I fear to leave him here. He might have such a piece of news to carry that he would desert and betray you."

He looked at her for any sign of fear or weakness, although she was to be left alone in a wilderness with a man who might be dying, and in a country which was in a state of revolution. Beverly debated within himself whether it was fair to go and leave her alone with the king, without telling her whom she was to guard; but he decided that there could be no good in giving her an extra danger to fear.

It was almost noon before he and the boy set off through the forest toward the road to Carpeth. Once there, Beverly determined to

get into the town, and bring away a physician, if it were at the point of a pistol. As he and the boy crashed down the hillside, the youngster pointed a finger toward a ravine which was hidden from view, except at this close range, by the thick firs.

"In there," he said, "is the house where men have been coming for a week. My mother knows. She is German. She tells them many things. I was not to tell, but you are also German, so it cannot matter."

Beverly almost held his breath. Which of them was it, Lubona or Marr, to whom "men had been coming?"

"They are not people of this country, altogether," the boy went on. "Some are Russians, miners from Orlun. They say they come here to work in mines, but my mother says there is more than the ear hears. They have guns," he whispered.

On a sudden, Beverly took a resolution. This must be John Marr's camp to which he had offered to bring them the night before. If he were there now, Beverly would go to him,

tell him where his daughter was, and give her into his hands.

"I am looking for those people. Take me there," he said to the boy.

They went cautiously, looking out for sentinels. Beverly's mind was about equally divided between a hope that they might find Marr there still and a wish that they might not. If Elinor left him and went to her father now, the probabilities were that he would never see her again; and he felt how much that would mean to him. But the girl's father was the man to take care of her, and he should know, if possible. Yet it was with a sinking at the heart, and with the consciousness that he had selfishly wished to keep Elinor near him at the risk of disaster to Boris' kingdom, that he saw a man through the vista of fir trees, and realized that it must be a sentinel. He was walking slowly, and looked like one of the better class of Carpathian farmers; but he carried his rifle as if he knew how to use it.

Beverly took out his notebook, wrote a few

words on a leaf and tore it out. The inside was written in English, but the address, to John Marr, was in German. He gave the boy his white handkerchief, telling him to go forward, waving it, and to ask the sentinel to pass him on with the note, which came from a friend with news.

He sat down and waited. There was no chance, he felt, for Marr to show treachery to him now. The boy seemed to have been gone a long time, when he heard the crash of footsteps on the dry twigs of many years, and looked up to see two men coming with the messenger. Neither was Marr.

Beverly cursed his folly for having taken so much for granted. Was this Lubona's camp, or a new uprising?

"They come up like puff balls, and I believe, on my soul, they are about as substantial," he said angrily.

There was no use in trying to move. He must make the best of it. The men were grave when they came near. Evidently they did not doubt that Beverly was a friend. The

English, which they could not understand, said that much to them. They asked, however, for news of Marr. He was to have been with them the night before. They were to collect a large force that day, and Marr had not arrived. They had not seen him since early in the day before. Where was he?

"Oh, Lubona!" Beverly cried to himself. "How much cleverer you are than I imagined!"

Realizing that Marr was in the hands of Lubona, as they themselves had been, he saw but one path before him, and that led to the rescue of Marr and his restoration to his daughter. Marr's daughter was the center of the universe now. But, first of all, help must come to the king.

Beverly's first impulse was to tell the men before him, these men of Marr's, that their leader was a prisoner, but he hesitated in time. He was learning that scattered confidences are dangerous, and that it is easier to be alone in a project unless you are quite sure of your allies.

"I expected to find Mr. Marr in this camp, but knew that he had other and important business which might detain him. He would go on to Carpeth," he said. Then a sudden thought made him turn. "Do you know of a physician near here? I have a friend who was to have come here with me who is very ill up the mountain."

Beverly had made up his mind that if he could find a man of any skill nearer than Carpeth, he would take him to Boris.

"I am strange to this part of the country," one of the men began, but the other spoke hastily. "There is Father Leo," he said in a low voice.

"Sh!" the first man said, but Beverly broke in anxiously:

"Where is this Father Leo? Who is he?"

"He is a sort of priest without a parish," the first man said. "He is a member of one of the oldest Carpathian families, but has long been cut off from his people by some estrangement—I do not know what; but his sympathies would be with—they would not be with Marr,"

"Oh, I see," Beverly said. "But is he skilful?"

One man shrugged his shoulders. "The peasants he cares for would not exchange his healing herbs and care for all the doctors in Christendom."

"That is no way to speak. He has the gift," the other added seriously.

"Where can I find this man?" the American asked. "There is no necessity for him to know that it is any friend of Marr's whom he tends. Any chance traveler may be ill."

"If it's Father Leo you want," the boy said eagerly, in German, "I can take you to him. He can cure anything. He cured me of the throat swelling by just saying a word or two."

Beverly turned impatiently, but one of the men observed dryly, "And he gave you something as well. You will make no mistake in taking Father Leo to your friend. He cures with words, of course. He always lays on hands, but he gives medicines too. It matters little which cures."

"How far is it?"

"Only over yonder, beyond my mother's farm," said the boy eagerly. "I can run to him while you wait here or go back. I will bring him."

"No," Beverly said. "I will go." He had a vision of the boy stopping at his mother's farm, and of the news of the sick man traveling with the gossip of the pig owner. It was safer to take the boy along. "I will go. Come on," he said.

They found the home of Father Leo without much difficulty. It was the outbuilding of what had evidently been a manor house, whose blackened foundations and charred beams had fallen among the new growing bushes after some long extinguished fire. The house was made of rubble and stone, whitewashed, and in the narrow doorway sat a man whose face would have impressed a less imaginative person than the young American reporter. It was not hard, and yet it was not soft and gentle. Father Leo seemed to look upon the world as something apart, something which

could bear no meanings for him. He wore the dress of the peasants, modified in ways that led toward comfort. This was no ascetic, wearing sackcloth and ashes for his soul's sake, but a man whom the emotions had ceased to charm. His hair was not long, nor was it cropped as short as is conventional. A black beard covered his lips and chin, and showed in relief a finely cut nose and black eyes. As he arose at Beverly's approach, the American wondered at the resemblance all these Carpathians of the upper class seemed to bear to Lubona. As in the face of the woman in the tree, he saw strong traces of the Carpathian who had become his enemy.

"What will you have?" Father Leo asked politely—in English, to Beverly's amazement. In a flash he saw that whatever the man was now, he had been an educated gentleman of the class which is taught to address a stranger of any nationality in his own language, if it be possible; and Beverly was well bred enough to make no comment.

"My name is Beverly," he said, hat in

hand. "I am an American traveler. I have a friend up here in the hills who had a hurt yesterday, and is very ill. Can you come to him? It would be an immense service."

"I am not a regular physician."

"But you may know what to do in this case. It appears to be one of exhaustion;" and he went on to recite Boris' injuries.

In ten minutes Father Leo was on his way up the hillside, his herbs and simples in a muslin bag in his hand. They had almost reached the byre when Beverly looked behind for the boy, and saw that he was gone. A crash in the underbrush gave a hint of the direction in which he had taken his departure, and with an exclamation of angry impatience, Beverly started after him.

"Come back here! Where are you going?" he cried.

But the boy went on. He knew these woods, and Beverly did not. The American's face was black as he reached the narrow wood path again. The hermit looked at him with an expression which was not wonder nor

curiosity. It was too indifferent for either, but it called out an explanation from Beverly.

"I suppose he will bring all his kin to look on the sick stranger," he said, with an uneasy laugh.

"The peasants are very sympathetic," the priest returned.

When they reached the hut they found Boris sleeping, and Elinor Marr sitting by him. She had rebandaged his head, and had tried to make gruel of some grain she had discovered. The sick man could not be expected to eat the ham, which was about the only food the place afforded.

At the entrance of the priest, she looked up with an expression of absolute relief. It was not necessary to tell her why he had come. He bore the look of the healer in his face, and her woman's intuition recognized it. She arose at once, and gave him her place by the bedside.

Beverly watched Father Leo as the priest first saw the face of the king. But if the healer knew him as the nation's sovereign, he

gave no sign. He had the familiar ways of the doctor the world over. He put a hand on his patient's brow and a finger on his pulse, and looked at him with the impersonal regard which a cabinet maker gives to a chair. Then he went over to the fire, and ordered Miss Marr to attend to stewing and preparing some of the herbs in his muslin bag. Beverly followed him, and insisted upon taking up the work himself, letting Elinor rest.

"There is nothing more to do," the priest told him.

"You must let me make a couch for you. You must sleep," Beverly said anxiously.

They had walked to the door of the hut, and could look across the plummy tops of trees to the valley below.

"I do not want to lie down, Mr. Hardin. Where has my father gone? I am afraid for him."

Her eyes were troubled and her lip trembled like a child's. Fatigue was beginning to show even upon her strong physique. The fact that she turned to him with that quivering

face stirred Beverly to the depths of his heart. He was divided in his impulses. He wanted to say to her, "Your father is in the hands of that double traitor Lubona, and it shall be my mission in life to rescue him and restore him to you." He wanted to make sure that she understood Lubona and hated him; he wanted to have his armor for the coming fray braced by the knowledge that she, his lady, his queen, knew that it was for her that he was setting out to do battle. But he put down his boyish longings, his vain imaginings, laughed at himself for wishing to pose as a hero of romance, and took refuge in the blessed old American way, that of misleading a woman so that she shall never know how miserable she really is.

"Your father is doubtless back at your home again by this time," he said cheerfully. "I left a note on his table telling him that you had decided to go to Carpeth, as you had some fears about remaining."

"That was unnecessary. I also left a note," she replied indifferently, "telling him that I

had learned of——” her face burned scarlet again——“of that man’s treachery.”

She spoke softly, and Beverly believed that she wished him to know himself forgiven; and then, after that flash of light, he felt his chances blacker than before. If she cared at all for him, if she did not look at him with just a womanly pity for the impetuous tactlessness of youth, would she have spoken to him at all in this way? Was it not because she was so much above him?

There must have been some such hungry inquiry in his face, for she turned away with a line between her brows, and looked into the conscious eyes of Boris.

She ran over to the reviving patient in a way which made Beverly envious, more particularly as he saw that the king fully appreciated her attention. He turned and went out on the hillside and sat down. He was mortally tired, and yet his work was scarcely begun. His brain seemed to have stopped; its machinery could act no longer. He saw the sun fall down behind the distant fringe of trees, and

wondered what the next twenty four hours would bring, much as if he had been reading a story in which the characters had arrived at a crisis. He felt that he might put the book down for a time without any very serious consequences.

He must have dozed for a moment when he became conscious that he was not alone. Father Leo had come out and was sitting beside him.

"Do you wish me to stay any longer?" the priest asked.

"How is the king?" Beverly inquired dully, and then sprang to his feet with an exclamation, wide awake, ready to tear his tongue out for his indiscretion.

"Sh!" the other man said calmly. "You need not be disturbed. I was at his coronation. I knew him. I have sat at his mother's table in Petersburg in other years. Young Prince Curt and I are old friends;" and he smiled as he looked down at his sheepskin bordered dress.

"Did he recognize you?"

"The memories of the young are not so long."

Beverly looked into the steady, changeless eyes of the man, and felt that he faced a gentleman. Whatever Leo said could be depended upon.

"What are you going to do?"

"Why should I do anything? The king has had a hunting accident, and I am doing what I can for him. There is in reality nothing the matter with him of a serious nature. He can ride tomorrow. He is worn out, exhausted, but he would have pulled through without me. He must have more nourishing food. I think we shall have that before long, however, as the woman who owns this land and the pigs about here, and whose son ran away, will come up with fowls and offers of assistance when her son tells her there is a sick man at one of her byres. She is a good soul, and rich travelers are not dependent upon her for food every day in the week. We can give the king some broth in *an hour* or two, unless I am mistaken."

"It was most fortunate we found you here. I confess I did not wish you to know that this was the king. I feared you might be against him."

"Why?" Evidently Father Leo had heard nothing of the revolutionary plans of Lubona.

"I don't know," Beverly said lamely. "You know I have only been here a short time, but it seemed to me that many of the Carpathians were——" Then he threw discretion to the winds. This man impressed him as he had impressed Elinor. Beverly was tired, and wanted the rest and relaxation of a confidant. "The truth is," he said, "that the king has just escaped a plot. He was injured purposely by the machinations of a Carpathian nobleman, was carried to that nobleman's home and made a prisoner."

Beverly was not looking at the priest, but he noticed a slight hoarseness in Father Leo's tone when he spoke again.

"And the beautiful young girl?"

"She was a tenant in Lubona's house, or

rather her father was. He trapped the father as well as us. When we escaped we could not leave Miss Marr defenseless, so we brought her along."

The priest clutched at his arm. "Lubona!" he said. "Is he in this country again? Was it he who injured the king, from whom you are hiding?"

Beverly turned abruptly at the touch.

"It is Lubona. He appears to be unpopular, after all—hardly the man to start a popular uprising. Do you know him, too?"

"Yes."

"We were warned against him by a girl—a girl who climbed a tree by my window. She seemed to know him, too."

"When? Where?" The man was full of a fire of excitement now. "A tiny little girl, a pretty little girl?" The voice was pathetic in its change to tenderness, the break in its sternness.

"A little black eyed girl who looked like *you*—and like Lubona."

XI.

WHAT need was there of telling the story ?

Put with what the unhappy girl had told him, Beverly had enough. He looked at Father Leo pityingly, and held his tongue, which, under the circumstances, was the only thing possible.

Presently the priest looked up. His stern, calm features had undergone a change. They had lost their smooth outward form and were shriveled into a mask of piteous misery, the misery of a strong man.

"Where is Henri Lubona ?" he asked, and in his tones Beverly heard the echo of a fixed determination. "He has been out of the country. I supposed that he had gone forever; that he would never touch the soil of his forefathers again."

"He has been here only a few weeks. He is chamberlain to the king."

"To betray him, as he has betrayed every trust ever put into his hands."

"Yes," Beverly said simply. To his mind that description of Lubona could not be improved upon.

The priest's face worked again. "Do you know where my daughter is?"

"I know, or I think I know, that she is not with Lubona. She knew that the king was in the house, and that he was in danger, but there appeared to be some break between her and Lubona." He would have added, "She was jealous of Miss Marr," but he could not bring himself to tell that to her father.

"I have not seen her for four years. I have never spoken her name for two years. My little Linda!" There was inexpressible sorrow in his tones. "She was to have married, and I, sick, sent her cousin, my adopted son, to Petersburg, to bring her from the school. They never came back. He eloped with her, and married her himself, against all of our laws and customs."

"Married her?" Involuntarily Beverly's

tone lightened. A change came over his mind concerning Lubona. After all, what was the prank of marrying one's cousin? Not a crime, surely. After all, the man might never have dreamed of Elinor Marr.

In the rush of feeling, he had a sudden sympathy for Lubona. His methods were mean and contemptible, but doubtless he considered himself a patriot. Beverly would ask Boris to forgive him, and would send him back to his wife.

"I am afraid we should hardly consider that so serious a crime," he said cheerfully. "If two young people find they are unhappy apart, we Americans, who do not happen to be their near relatives, find it in our hearts to forgive them."

The other man's face did not relax.

"But it could never be a legal marriage here. He abandoned my daughter, telling her that she was not his wife. In this country she is not. He abandoned her in Paris. I followed them, but she had disappeared. I searched Europe for them, but they were not

found. Then I came back here and hid my shamed face among these hills."

"Lubona has been in America," Beverly said.

"And she?"

"I do not know," Beverly replied hastily.

"But she knew his plans. She knew his men."

"Like many a woman before her," the man said bitterly, "she cannot let him go. She seeks to win back, in some fashion, the life which she has given him. My——" he rose and walked hastily away.

"I will help you to hunt Lubona, and I do not believe the task will be difficult. He is probably in Carpeth, making plans, or carrying them out, to seize the government. He has had all this day."

"The king could go on to Carpeth tonight," Leo said. "He is strong enough. His weakness was only temporary. He only needs food. He can go if he desires to do so."

"Then he shall;" and Beverly started toward the house.

"But you?" Leo said. "You need rest."

"Oh, I am accustomed to living without sleep," the American answered lightly, although the edges of his eyelids were beginning to feel as if a drop of mucilage had strayed among the lashes.

Beverly went into the house and found Boris drinking something from a bowl which the young girl held. His refreshing sleep, the gruel, or perhaps some mental tonic, had wakened him to life again. Beverly could see in his eyes and cheeks almost the full tide of health flowing back through his mercurial temperament.

The king let Elinor hold the bowl to his lips, looking up at her now and then with an almost childlike confidence and gravity. The picture filled the man who looked at it with exasperation.

"Let me broil you some ham," Beverly said quietly. "The doctor says that you are quite able to travel tonight. I will bring the horses around, and the doctor will see you on your way to Carpeth."

Boris sat up. His tunic had been taken off, and the fine linen shirt which he wore under it was loosened around his muscular neck.

"Oh, see here, Hardin," he said, "I am too sick to move. Not but what a piece of ham has a savory sound."

"We are going to move. It will not do to keep Miss Marr here any longer. She cannot sleep here."

"Certainly not," Boris said, and sprang to the floor. He turned a little giddy as he stood, but he recovered himself in a moment. "Miss Marr is a famous nurse," he went on. "She has brought me around very fit."

"Oh, I am afraid you should lie still," the girl said.

Beverly had cut a slice from a ham which hung from the low, smoky roof. It was evidently the herd boy's chief food, and he kept it here by the fire where it could be sliced with his clasp knife. In a second or two it was broiling over the coals, while Boris hungrily watched its progress. He had struggled into his tunic, and sat disheveled, handsome,

like some rowdy boy on a camping expedition. Beverly hastily pushed into his hand the long skewer of wood he had been using for a fork.

"I will go and get the horses," he said. "You can take the meat up and eat it when it is ready."

As he looked back through the open door, the scene was like a Rembrandt study. The door let out the firelight from the black hole of a hut, and showed before it the two young figures, the girl's auburn hair touched by the flames into molten gold, relieved against Boris' black head. The king was on his knees before her, the stick in his hand. Beverly went on with a heavy heart.

The horses had been tethered and allowed to crop the short, sweet mountain grass, and for an instant he had a deadly fear, for they were not in the place where he had left them. Had Lubona found them, after all? He started back, and saw, peeping from behind a great, bush grown boulder, the face of the German boy.

"The horses are here," the lad said. "I

thought you would come to see after them, and I put them here. I was told to see you alone."

Beverly walked hastily around the rock, his hand on his revolver, and giving the edge a wide berth so that he could see if an enemy were concealed there. But the place was empty.

"Who told you to see me alone?" he asked sharply.

"A lady."

"What lady?"

"A lady down the mountain. She gave me some money, and told me to tell you to come to the wood over yonder and speak to her. She sent this." He pulled from his pocket the little red cap which Beverly had seen on the black hair of the girl in the tree; or if it was not that, it was one exactly like it.

"Where did you see her? What did you tell her?"

"I told my mother who was here—two gentlemen and a lady. The lady staying there asked me all I could tell. Then she came

here. Oh, she *ran!* I am out of breath. She made me change the horses. She knew you would notice that at once. She' is waiting."

"How do I know that you are not lying to me, that there are not other people over there?"

The moon was making the sky tender now, and the deep mountain wood was black.

"Because the lady is there," the boy said stolidly.

It was a chance, if she was there, which Beverly could not afford to miss. He walked hastily across the short slope, broken here and there by rocks and boulders, until he came into the shadow of the trees. Then there stepped out to meet him the tiny woman whom he had last seen under his window at Lubona's castle.

"You may put up your revolver," she said in her broken English. "There is nobody here to kill; and in any case you have done enough of that. It is a pity you did not include Count Lubona in the massacre."

Her voice was hard, and Beverly realized that he disliked her more than ever. She was utterly antipathetic to him, and he had a whimsical idea that Lubona might be pardoned for leaving her if she ruffled him as badly.

"I do not want to kill any one," he began, but she cut him short.

"How ill is the king?"

"He is almost well again."

"The next thing is to get him to Carpath as quickly as possible."

"I think we understand that——"

"Before Lubona gets there."

Beverly's mind sprang at her words. "Hasn't he been there?"

"Not he! He thought that if he could get his hands on his lord and sovereign he might be able to settle the question without any trouble. He knows where you are—now, and he is waiting for you to take—that girl—away, to attack you. He knows you won't keep her there all night. He has gone too far to go back now."

"Then Lubona's men are near by?"

"Very near by. They are on the only road you can take to get away from here. They saw you come out this morning. They let you come back, so that you could take the American girl away without alarming her. Everybody is very careful about alarming her, although I have noticed no timidity in her manners."

"Where is Marr?"

"Why should I tell you that? Yes! That is what I came here to tell you. Lubona will keep him a prisoner till he consents to the count's marriage with his daughter."

"But a man like Marr cannot disappear."

"Oh, yes, he can. Evidently you do not know our country. Anybody can disappear in Carpathia. They are traveling in the mountains—indefinitely."

"But Lubona cannot marry Miss Marr when you are already his wife."

The woman sprang back a step and gave a cry as if she had been struck.

"Who told you that?"

"Your father."

He said the words solemnly.

"Does he know? My father! My father! Where is he? Where is my father?"

She had her hand on his arm, and she had drawn her face up as close as possible to his.

"He is in that hut over there."

She sank down in a heap on the ground and broke into sobs which shook her childish figure. All the vivid passion of the brilliant little creature went into her emotion.

"Would you like to see him?" Beverly asked. "He wants to see you. He told me that he had not seen you for four years. He has searched up and down Europe for you. He had heard——"

"Does he know? Does he know? Lubona told me that he had died. I have seen no one that knew him in these years. I did not ask for him anywhere. I went back and looked at the gates of my old home, and they were closed and rusted. I thought he was dead." She stood up and touched Beverly's hand again, crying feverishly, childishly: "You

must get him away from there before Lubona comes. They must not meet. My father will kill him ! ”

“ You said you wanted him dead. ”

“ I do. Oh, I could say that to you. You cannot kill him ; he is too wise and cunning for you. You could find no way to kill him but my father ! My father would kill him with his bare hands. They must not meet. ”

“ Will you come and see your father ? ”

“ No, no ! Let me tell you where Marr is. I came to tell you. He is in the tower room in the castle. ”

“ In the castle ? ”

“ Yes, you left him behind when you came away. He was bound and gagged, and carried through a door which opens only into the tower. He might have seen you when you rode away. He is there now, but I do not know how long he will remain there. It is a safe place. Lubona had planned it out, I suppose, when he rented the castle to Marr, but you managed to complicate matters for him. ”

She had arisen, and stood easily, talking

flippantly again ; but Beverly could hear the choking sighs with which she stifled sobs, like a hurt child.

“ How do you know this ? ”

“ Do you suppose there is ever a time when I do not know where he is ? ” she asked hoarsely.

There was only one “ he ” in the world for her.

“ If you have so much influence over these Carpathians, and can make them tell you anything,” Beverly said angrily, “ why do you not tell them of their folly in following Lubona ? ”

“ Go back and give your warning,” she returned rudely. “ You do not know of what you speak ; ” and she turned and disappeared in the wood.

Beverly almost ran back, but he had obtained a view of Leo Lubona’s daughter which told him that her father would never draw her away from the man she loved. It was not that she wished to save the king, or to defeat Lubona’s plans except as she imagined that they concerned Miss Marr. If

she could blacken him in Elinor's eyes, all was well.

"I appear to have pretty much the same motives," Beverly admitted, in self depreciation.

The boy was there with the horses, and he stopped and saddled them.

"Are you going away now?" the lad asked. "Are you taking the lady?"

A sudden thought struck the American. He put his hand into his pocket and drew out a handful of money.

"Is this as much as you want, not to tell the men below where we are, and to show us an unguarded path through the forest?"

"How much is it?" asked the boy. "It is too dark to see." Evidently he knew how to make a bargain.

"Come nearer, into the house; I don't want you to be slipping away from me again;" and the boy followed. "Stand there," Beverly added, as he went inside.

The sight of Boris' high spirits put Beverly into the state of exasperation against which

he had been fighting for twenty hours. The king sat before the fire, eating the broiled slices of ham, without bread, and talking like a man on a picnic, while Elinor and the elder Lubona sat beside him. The girl's face was weary, but not despondent; on the man's the old calm expression was creeping back. They all looked up when Beverly came in.

"Miss Marr," he said, "will you go to the door and hold the horses, and that boy, for a few moments? I am afraid he is not to be trusted. If he asks how—Count Festin is, do not tell him, although," he added, "if he cared to look through the door or the chinks in the walls he could have little doubt of the state of his health."

After she had gone, wondering a little at his tone, Beverly sat down and told his story.

"Where did you get all this?" Boris asked. "How do you know that the whole thing is not the false tale of a spy? Or is it the lady again?"

When Beverly did not answer, the king went on merrily, addressing the hermit:

"Our friend appears to be one of those magnetic people who can always find a woman ready to help them out of any sort of a scrape. He hadn't been in Lubona's castle an hour before one was trying to climb into his window."

"Hush," Beverly said. "This gentleman knows you are the king. He is your friend, and the woman who has done so much for your interests is his daughter."

"I beg your pardon," Boris said sweetly, and put out his hand. "I beg you to forgive an idle tongue."

"You and Father Leo and Miss Marr will take the horses. I advise you to take my clothing, and give me yours," Beverly went on. "Father Leo can find a place of safety for Miss Marr in Carpeth."

"And you?"

"I shall find my way to the spot where Marr's men are awaiting him, tell them that their leader is imprisoned, and rescue him."

"That you shall not do," Boris said, rising to his feet. "It would give me two revolu-

tions upon my hands instead of one. That I will not consent to. I am still king."

"And may I ask if you expect to let Marr remain there?"

"He may remain there until I am re-established in Carpeth, with my kingdom well in my hand. It appears to be a safe place for him."

"And let his daughter go on with you, although her father is a prisoner, subjected to you know not what indignities? If you can do this, I will not. I will do my best to get Marr away from Lubona and back to his daughter. He is not a dog. He will not oppose you then."

"Your opinion of your compatriot differs from my own," Boris said, "I believe he would stop at nothing. I cannot say I blame him. He is committing no particular crime. If he succeeds he is a great man; only I do not happen to want him to succeed. My duty to my country, if nothing else, would cause me to leave him behind bars until I can let him out on my own terms. He is a conspirator."

"And if it had not been for his daughter you would now be a prisoner yourself, in all probability."

"Aided by you, my dear American ; aided by you. Do not let your modesty defeat my gratitude. I confess that it is excellent news to me that one of the enemies of my throne is in safe hands. I hope he may remain there. I am off to Carpeth with a lighter heart. Come!"

He went toward the door with something of his old swagger. Beverly rose impatiently and followed him. He looked toward the place where he had left the boy with the horses, and asked Elinor Marr to stand and watch him. He could see no one. With a clutch of fear at his heart he ran out. The byre was a tumble down place built in the rocks, one of which made the rude chimney. The moon was coming up in a trembling mist, and was yet faint behind the tops of the trees. As Beverly ran out into this open place, it had the desolation of a desert to his gaze, for the horses, the boy, and the woman he loved had disappeared.

"Elinor! Elinor!" he called wildly at the top of his voice.

Over in the trees it seemed to him he heard an echo that might have been a laugh, but beyond that the whole world seemed to lie in the silence of evening. Peace lay in the darkening valley, but it was a peace which exasperated Beverly to the last degree.

"Fool! Fool!" he shouted in his own ears. Why had he not realized the danger of sending that girl outside? Sweat broke out on his body as he thought what he might have sent her to. He rushed on wildly toward the wood. He would follow, they would find that they had a man to deal with, and if they had an army he would overtake them. He was in the fringe of trees, and amid deep blackness, before the folly of his course came home to him.

Boris and the hermit were behind him; Boris looking for the road, and the old man stooping on his knees and following the tracks of the horses. Beverly came back.

"You may defend yourself now," he said to

Boris. "Your shield has gone. They were not to attack us while she was here, but she has gone."

Quite unconscious of what he did he went to Boris and shook him by the shoulder. The two young men faced each other, and each read the other's secret in his eyes. Boris' face was ghastly, and his black eyes were full of a light which had been born in them in that instant. Crowns, principalities, even life itself, had never had the value which this young girl had assumed, and he saw that in Beverly's face which told him that he faced a man to whom she was as precious.

"I will follow. She must be brought back, and at once."

"Follow!" and Beverly laughed. "They have a road and horses. We are watched, and are on foot. Get to Carpath and save your kingdom. I will look for—my country-woman."

"What are you going to do?"

"I am going to that camp where Marr's 'miners' are, and I will tell them that their

leader and his daughter are prisoners. If she is not found," he said furiously, "I will see that your miserable little kingdom is thrown into the sea. Americans cannot be treated in this fashion." His rage and the long strain on his nerves were too much for him. He was losing his head.

"Where is the camp? Let us go," Boris said calmly.

The figure of Leo stood by them as they finished speaking. It had been as if they had thrown a challenge into each other's faces.

"The horses went into the wood, where it is too dark to follow their tracks," he said. "There is no road in that direction, and they may be hiding in the trees; but it will be hopeless to venture there. I do not believe that the insurgents"—he did not speak Lubona's name—"intend to murder you, your majesty. They would be only mountain brigands in that case, and could never hope for a republic. They might be forgiven for holding you through a *coup d'état*, but never for killing you."

"Except by accident," Boris put in dryly. "But I do not wish to be captured. The quickest thing to do is to visit Marr's camp and get out those men. I have contracted a debt, and I will pay it." He spoke as though the rescue were a matter of courtesy, but he deceived no one.

"I know the short way," Leo said. The two young men had lost sight of the priest in their own excitement, but as a note in his voice struck the nerves of Beverly he turned. The old indifference, the grief, were all gone. Here was a man thirsty for revenge, with a double insult to lash him into fury. There was no need for him to open his close set lips. His whole aspect was full of threat to Lubona. He had the bitterest wrong a man can know to carry him forward.

Beverly had two pistols, and he offered one of them to Leo. The man took it in silence, and the three scrambled down the hillside and made their way toward the ravine where Beverly had seen Marr's men earlier in the day. They kept a constant lookout,

Once they heard a sound of feet moving through the wood. Silently all three crouched to the ground behind sheltering rocks or trees and waited. Not one but felt that these were their pursuers.

The elder man rose once, and tried to peer into the gloom. A little rift in the rocks and trees here, probably formed in some long past winter by a mountain torrent or avalanche, made an opening through which the moonlight streamed. As the men with rifles paced slowly and carefully through this place, the faint rays behind them outlined their figures and glinted on their arms. They were great bearded fellows, and they reminded Beverly of Henry Irving's procession of phantom kings in "Macbeth." The thought made their whole expedition theatrical for the moment, and then he seemed to see himself back in the barbarous days of the Scottish wars, and to realize how far behind him he had left civilization.

He knew that Leo had stood up with the pistol in his hand, and that if one of these

bearded savages had passed on to give place to the smooth, elegant figure of Lubona, the bullet would have carried a straight message to that traitor heart. But Lubona was not there, though he counted nearly two hundred men.

"He must have a larger army than I can muster," Boris said, "to be able to send out a company like that to capture two pedestrians on a mountain side."

They had almost reached the place where Beverly had waited a few hours before, while the boy brought Marr's lieutenants to him, when he turned to Leo and asked him if he knew how to get into the camp.

"Everybody about here knows me," Leo said. "I will go ahead. They are hidden away in the ravine there. It is the mouth of an old mine which Marr has been pretending to work."

"Why hasn't our young friend whose hospitality we have been enjoying betrayed the camp?"

"Because his mother sold them her chickens, and because he was not tempted, perhaps."

"Let us go by the farm house and see if he has returned. He will be able to tell us——"

"The camp first. We may find means to make him tell all he knows. The farm house is beyond the camp," Leo said.

The two young men halted as they neared the mouth of the ravine. They did not want to be shot down by the sentries in the darkness. Minute after minute they stood there, waiting, but Leo did not return. The silence between them grew embarrassing.

"Is this a game of hide and seek?" Beverly finally asked angrily. "Is it impossible for one of us to leave the others for a moment? Do they intend to pick us up one at a time?"

A smothered cry was his answer, and both of them started in the direction from which it came. In an open patch of moonlight, they saw Leo holding the herd boy firmly, with one hand over his mouth. Still carrying the lad, he strode over to them and into the shadow.

"The camp is empty," he said simply. "It must have been Marr's men who passed us in the wood. This boy was carrying food to

them. Here it is ;” and he held out a basket. “Now, my young friend,” he added in German, “tell why you allowed the lady to be carried away, and who did it. Speak the truth, or I will kill you.”

The boy sat panting in fear. This was not the gentle Father Leo whom he knew.

“I do not know anything,” he whimpered. “I was holding the horses and talking to the lady, when somebody put something over my face. I couldn’t say a word. They put me on one of the horses. I couldn’t hear anything or see anything. They let me down just beyond here.”

“You are lying,” Leo said roughly, “for you have been at home. You brought this basket from there.”

“I—the basket was for the men who have gone, just as you said,” he went on cunningly.

“Nor is that true. You were taken home to get this food to carry to some one. Who is it, and where? Answer me!” The tone was like a sentence of death, and the coward quivered under it.

"She told me to bring it to the top of the hill."

"She! Who?"

"The lady."

"The lady?" Leo shook him. "What lady? The lady who was carried away?"

"No, the other one—the little one. I take it to her every night."

Leo let him go.

"Where is she?"

"She is only there," the boy said sullenly. "I don't know where she goes."

"Who took the young lady?" Beverly asked, but his question had no such effect as that of the hermit.

"I don't know," was the only answer.

"Let him take the food," Leo said; and the boy rose and disappeared among the trees.

XII.

A SUDDEN thought came to Beverly, and he acted upon it.

"Go on to Carpeth!" he called back to the men, and ran lightly up the hill after the boy.

He was not so nimble as that young man, but his legs were longer, and after a game of hide and seek, and a scrambling fall on the rocks, he overtook the youth, and held him.

"Take me to the *ladies*!" he said.

The German boy was shrewd in some ways, but he had had almost too much for his small brain to hold. "Did she tell you?" he asked stupidly.

"She planned it with me in the wood," Beverly boldly romanced. "Take me to them. I have important messages for them."

"Well, come along, then. Only she might have told me."

"You will have to learn that women do not tell everything they know. They like secrets."

"Oh, yes, they like them," the boy said in a disgusted fashion, as if he had been of age and experience. "She didn't tell me you had planned it. She told me how easy it would be, and gave me the money after she had thrown the scarf over the young lady's head and had her fastened. She's strong, that little woman."

"Yes, she is strong," Beverly agreed. He had such a sense of relief at discovering that it was the woman who had taken Elinor that his heart felt light. She would not be hurt, and he could take her away. Kings might take care of themselves. He would take her to Carpath, and would make such a stir that they would be compelled to release John Marr on whichever side the kingdom fell. If it became Lubona's government there might be some difficulty in doing it, but he had faith in the telegraph instruments.

The boy had no doubt of him whatever, as

he had come alone. Carpathians appeared to be accustomed to traitors. They had only a short distance to go. Once or twice Beverly had looked back and listened for some trace of the king and Leo, but they had not followed.

As they crossed the hills back and forth, something in the place became familiar to Beverly, and he saw that he was before Leo's own house, seemingly empty and dark.

"She couldn't take the lady to my mother's house," the boy said apologetically, "and I brought them here. Father Leo was with you. Sometimes he stays away for a long time, and anybody who cares to may live in his house."

He went cautiously up to the door with his basket, and Beverly stood just behind him. As the wooden door was opened, Beverly seized the basket and made his way into the room, pushing the tiny figure of Linda Lubona out of his way. It was pitch dark, but she made no sound.

"Wait a moment, and I will strike a

match," Beverly said calmly, while his heart pulsed with excitement.

There was no answer, no movement. If Elinor Marr was there, she made no sign.

Beverly took his match box from his pocket with trembling fingers, struck the wax vesuvian on the rough edge, and held up the tiny taper. It showed him the Carpathian woman standing with white, defiant face and shining eyes motionless before him. In the back of the room, on the couch where Leo was accustomed to sleep, was the form of Elinor Marr.

She lay on her side, her face away from him. Beverly took two long steps like leaps and was beside her, bending over her. He forgot everything now except that here was the woman he loved, that she was in danger and distress.

"Elinor!" he said, and put out his hand to touch her. But Linda Lubona took his arm.

"Why disturb her? She sleeps. She is exhausted."

"What have you given her?" he cried angrily. "How did you put her to sleep?"

He bent down suddenly and put his face over the unconscious one on the rough linen pillow. A strong smell of chloroform came up to his nostrils.

He turned to the Carpathian woman. "You have killed her!" he said.

He took Elinor into his arms, and lifted her bodily. Her head dropped back limply on his arm, and he put a hand under it as he would have lifted an infant's head. Then, dashing to the door, he opened it and carried the girl out into the air, where he sat down on one of the stones of the old foundation. He could see the German boy still standing stupidly waiting.

"Bring me water!" he said. He was slapping the limp, white hands, and the cheeks, trying to think of some way to fight the poison.

Linda Lubona came and stood by him with the water.

"You need not be so disturbed," she said. "She has not had much. It would have worn off before this if she had not been so tired."

Beverly paid no attention to her. He dipped his handkerchief into the water and pressed it down on the girl's forehead and cheeks, talking to her, begging her to open her eyes. Once, when she stirred, he looked up at Linda.

"If she dies," he said solemnly, "I will kill you."

She only laughed back at him.

"She is not going to die. You should thank me for saving her from falling into the hands of—my husband. I do not want to kill her, but he shall not have her. I would sooner kill her than that!" she went on passionately. "I knew as soon as the boy told me that the Father Leo they speak of was my father, and lived here, that she would be safe here. Lubona will never dare come here. I would have told her, if I had had time. I would have told her when she awakened. She is a woman, and she might have understood."

"How much of this stuff did you give her?" he asked.

"I saturated the scarf I threw over her face with it."

"She may die! Elinor! My Elinor!"

He was trying to bring her back to consciousness by every means in his power, and still she lay, with the moon shining down on her white face and beautiful hair, limp, unconscious, but breathing. Beverly's hope almost died, and the long strain took away his fortitude. He drew the sweet head up against his breast, and the tears ran down his cheeks, while he felt that the end of all things had come for him. The air, and perhaps the change of position, started the working of the girl's paralyzed brain. She gave a long, gasping sigh, and her eyelids fluttered. Beverly let her head droop back to his arm, and looked at her anxiously.

"Elinor!" he said again; and her eyes opened wide and gazed into his with a terror that tore his heart.

"Where am I?" she said. "Oh, where am I?" Then she recognized the anxious face above her, and Beverly's heart seemed to

melt in his bosom as he saw the look of relief that overspread her face. In it he read perfect confidence, but wonder.

"What happened?" she asked. "I thought I was put on a horse and carried away from you, and I could not scream." She spoke weakly.

"It was all a mistake," he said soothingly, as though she were a child. "Do not think of it. I will take care of you now. Nothing shall harm you."

"I thought you would find me," she said. She had not lifted her head from his arm, and she did not realize that he was holding her across his knees. His face flushed hot at the fear of her start when her consciousness fully returned.

"Bring me some sort of a wrap," he said to Linda, who stood by.

The idea of a third person, the recollection that there was another world, brought her to herself with a shock. She made an effort and rose, sat up, saw where she was, and sprang to her feet.

"How—how could you?"

"Because there was no other way," he said humbly. "I had to carry you into the air, because—your life, your instant safety, meant more to me than all beside." He could not help it. She looked to him for excuse, for protection against himself. "Because I was wild with fear for you—for I love you."

She started to speak, but he stopped her.

"I did not mean to say it," he said. "Do not say anything to me. I will take you to Carpeth, and, please God, safely out of this cursed country. Do not say anything to build a wall between us now. Forget what I said."

He was not looking at her, or he might have left his last words unsaid. There was that in her face which might have spared him many things in the coming days could he only have known it.

"Who brought me away? Not—that man?"

"It was a jealous, insane woman, Lubona's wife." It was better to tell her everything.

"His *wife*?"

"Yes. He married his cousin, the daughter of Father Leo, and deserted her. She was afraid you would fall into his hands, and she tried to get you away from him. On my soul, I believe that to be her only reason."

"But I cannot see her again. I cannot stay here with her. You—you will not leave me?"

"Do you think I came here to leave you? I will never leave you again until I can see you in safety."

"Until you take me to my father."

"I cannot promise that. Your father does not dream that you are in danger. He may be far away. But you shall be in safety."

She had come back to him, and stood resting her hand upon an old stone coping. She looked so white and tall and beautiful that it seemed to Beverly that the whole world must be able to see this radiant vision from any distance.

"Come back into the house. You must not stay here. Come."

"But Count Festin? Where is he?"

Beverly's sensitive ear caught a question between her words which awakened again his resentment against Boris. She seemed to say, "Where is he, that he is not here when I am in danger?" or so it sounded. But he should have his due.

"He started after you with me and Father Leo, but I left them, and by chance it was I who found you. He has important business in Carpeth."

"But I fear he is not strong enough to travel far."

"It is not very far to Carpeth," Beverly said dryly.

"He needs to be taken care of." There was a pause. "Can we go to Carpeth, now?"

"To take care of Count Festin?"

"No—to be safe."

"It would be infinitely better to stay here tonight. You are safe here."

"I fear that woman." A shudder went over her. She was dizzy and weak.

"I will not leave you."

She looked at him now, and the moon beams showed how worn and exhausted he was. His head and shoulders drooped from a weariness he could not control. For the first time she saw that this man might grow tired like others.

"You must sleep," she said. "I am not tired now. I will watch while you sleep. I will keep the boy and your pistol with me."

Beverly rose out of his lethargy and laughed.

"Come into the house," he said.

The little hut where Leo lived had been an outhouse, a combination office and store room such as is found on many country estates in Europe, and was common on the old plantations in America. It was divided into two rooms, one of which was small, and had only one window, high in the wall. Linda Lubona had seated herself on the doorstone, and now she arose like some tiny witch, as the two young people passed her by.

Beverly took the couch on which Elinor had been lying, pushed it into the small closet room, and hunted about until he found a

candle. Giving Elinor this and some matches, he opened the door and let her pass in. Presently he saw the basket of food lying where he had dropped it when he entered. The coarse towel had fallen away from the fowls and bread and the bottle of milk, and the sight made him ravenous. He knocked softly at the door, and asked Elinor if she was hungry. She came out and asked him what he had said.

He held up a chicken by its leg.

"Kingdoms may fall, but man must be fed. Are you hungry?"

She smiled and put her hands to her head.

"I am hungry, but my head aches."

He poured the milk into a glass he found turned up on a shelf. Leo had kept some civilized manners of living in his hermitage.

"Drink this," he said; and he held the glass in his own hands while she put her lips to it and drank it like a child.

Linda Lubona sat in the doorway and watched them with a speculation growing in her cunning black eyes. If Lubona could

only see them now, she argued in her distorted brain, he would care for this red haired girl no longer. He would make no further plots concerning her. It is the foolish idea of a jealous woman that the man she loves would come back to her if the fancy of the moment were destroyed. She is quite oblivious of the fact that she has wholly ceased to charm him, or he never would have left her at all. But feminine human nature will act on its fallacies, when it is bold enough, until the end of time.

After Elinor had gone into the little closet and closed the door, Beverly took a blanket, threw it over him, and lay down before the door. He was so weary that he had thought of nothing but seeing Elinor safe, and of the stern call for rest. But a thought struck him. He went to the door where Linda sat, and took her by the arm.

"Where is the chloroform?" he asked.

She looked up at him calmly.

"I used it all."

"I have a mind to tie you, so that you may do no more mischief."

"I have done you good service. I have brought this girl, who has evidently turned your head, as she has that of every other man, to a place of safety, and I have allowed you to appear as a rescuer in her eyes. She is not going to be hurt, nor are you. Go to sleep."

"What are you going to do?"

"I am going to watch here to see that your peaceful slumbers are not disturbed." She looked him squarely in the eyes. "Believe me, or not," she said evenly. "I do not wish to hurt you. You are not my enemy. I have had but one purpose in coming to you—to keep Lubona from marrying this girl. I intended to tell her of his villainies when she awoke, and if she cared for him—I could tell—I might have killed her. But she does not; she loves you. You are a fool if you do not see it. I intended to tell her that her father was going to be tortured. I intended to make her as unhappy as possible. Getting her here was not in my plans in the beginning, although I have carried that chloroform for

her for a week. I was looking for her last night. Do you think I care who rules in Carpathia? Only Lubona shall not have her." She spoke like a veritable fury. Her eyes blazed cat-like in the semi darkness, and her tiny hands were clenched.

"You understand now, do you not," Beverly said soothingly, "that she would do nothing against you, that she hates Lubona?"

"I know she loves you. I could see it in her face when you talked there. I only want you to take care that Lubona does not see her again."

It may have been that there was something in her fury of jealousy which awakened an answering chord in Beverly's own breast. He had a nature that could vibrate to the primitive passions; and she had told him something which ran like wine through his veins. He left her and went back to lie down before Elinor's door, and in a moment was deep in the sleep of exhaustion.

But before he lost himself, he wondered who had helped Linda and the boy to bring

Elinor to the house—and vaguely, what had become of the horses. And Linda, as she looked on, determined that Lubona should see the lovers, and surprise them in such a way that he should see himself scorned.

Elinor was lying on a sort of bunk. She had loosened her collar, and her red gold hair hung down to the floor. But for that she was fully dressed. The room was so small that she lay very near the door, and when Linda propped it open, Beverly was almost at her side. The Carpathian took a long tress of the hair and put it over the man's broad chest, and then went softly away and left them.

She knew where to find Lubona's men—what was there concerning *him* she did not know?—and her woman's cunning taught her how to lure him to the snare. And presently he was hurrying to what he expected would be triumph, but what she saw would be only mortification.

XIII.

BORIS and Leo stood watching the place where Beverly had disappeared, till the king sat heavily down, his hand to his head.

"It is rather a long walk from here to Carpath," he commented cheerfully, "and I cannot say that I feel in the humor for sprinting. Where do you suppose my young friend has disappeared to?" He almost added, "What can the girl tell him now?" but he remembered who the girl was, and held his tongue upon that subject.

"My prince," Leo Lubona said, "I have a hut here in the hills. Would it not be well for you to rest there before you go any farther?"

"I think not. I have done too much resting. I must get back to Carpath, but how? Are there horses to be found at that farm house? I want to get my hands on that devil

of a Lubona." He arose and spoke feverishly. "I cannot linger. I must get to my own men, and get them after Lubona, to rescue Miss Marr. He is a fiend——"

"You cannot call him too many names, but to do so is a waste of breath," the older man said. "I will go to the farm house and try to get horses, but like every other place it is probably watched. We may only succeed in falling into Henri Lubona's hands again."

"Let me get a sight of him!"

Leo made a sound in his throat which Boris rightly interpreted to mean that were Linda's father to catch sight of the count, any subsequent observations would be taken upon a dead man. But both realized how helpless they were, here in the wilderness without horses. Boris felt that Beverly's desertion had been wanton, though he could not question the young American's right to go where he pleased and carry on his investigation after his own fashion.

They started together toward the farm

house, and when they reached its lights they saw that the big kitchen was filled with men. Boris stood still in the shelter of a hedge, while Leo cautiously approached the house. It was only a moment before he was back again.

"The house and the stables are in the hands of men who are upon some expedition. It would be madness for us to try to get horses. I must take you to my house. I have a horse there. It is old and not swift, but it can carry you to Carpeth by morning."

Traveling upon almost parallel lines, the two Lubonas and Boris, the king, walked toward the house where Beverly and Elinor Marr slept. Linda had gone ahead, and slipping in, had crouched just inside the door of the room where Elinor lay. Neither of the sleepers had moved. The moon had crept up until the square from the window covered not only the face of Elinor, but that of Beverly as well, and glittered along the golden tress lying upon his breast.

The breath of both of these healthy young

people rose and fell in peace, but that of Linda Lubona came in struggling gasps. She held a revolver in her hand. She meant to give it to Beverly when the time came to awaken him, so that he might not be quite unarmed—although she had a deadly, chilling fear of the use to which he might put it. It was not in her program, however, to see Lubona kill Beverly and carry the American girl off. She had not thought of the possibility of his doing that until the past few minutes. She was beginning to feel as a great many women have felt before, after setting a machine in motion which they were quite unable to control. But some crisis must of necessity come. She could not go on living her life like this.

Every sound outside was magnified. Linda had left the door open, and the space before the house was clearly visible. When at last she saw a shadow cross it, she had to bite her tongue and clench her hands until the nails marked deep into the palms, to keep from crying out aloud. She waited, hardly breathing, but the shadow did not come closer.

She had closed her eyes for a second, and did not see that the first shadow was followed by a second, and that they went toward the back of the house, to a clump of trees where a rude shed stood.

Leo was the first to enter. Boris had lingered on the outside, but an exclamation of astonishment caused him to go forward hastily. Leo had taken a match box from his pocket and struck a match. As the king came up, he saw, standing together, the three horses which had been taken from the hut on the hill—the three horses which he and Elinor and Beverly had ridden from Marr's stable. Here was the swift little mare, the big hunter, and the intelligent saddle horse which had carried him in the darkness. He looked at them, and involuntarily put a hand to his arms. If Lubona were here, the animals must be guarded by somebody. He cast a quick look about, but saw no one.

"Here, in this place?" Leo said, and his voice was thick.

"He must be here."

"In my house?" The man could not believe it. "Come with me into the house," he said. It was dark, and the door was open. "It may be a trap, but——" he closed his lips.

"Not until I get a horse—one horse, at least. I must be sure of that," Boris said gravely.

The saddles had not been removed, but the bridles were slipped so that the horses could eat. Leo would not wait. He started toward the house, almost running, and in a moment or two Boris followed him, leading the horse. There was a piece of wood lying at the side of the building, and this Leo put up to be used as a support while he looked into the small window. Boris gave him a tug which pulled him to the ground, and he and the board came down together, making a noise.

"Do you want to make a bullseye in the center of that window?" the king said.

Linda heard the noise, and was so intent upon watching the window that she did not see Lubona slip through the door and stand

for an instant amazed and astonished at the picture before him. Beverly's face, where he had expected to see that of the king, filled him with rage. He could not move, he did not know how to move, but he was suddenly pushed into life by the sound of a shot near him. It was from the pistol in the hands of Linda. She had seen the face which Leo had succeeded in lifting to the window notwithstanding Boris' protests, and she fired toward it, almost at random, her real purpose being to awaken Beverly and Elinor.

Beverly sprang to his feet with an exclamation, all alive in an instant, but for the moment unconscious of his surroundings. He only knew, or rather felt, that Elinor was there beside him, and he sprang to protect her. She in her turn went toward him with an instinct as unreasoning.

Meanwhile Leo and Boris ran around the house, determined to carry it at a rush.

"She is in there asleep, and two men. I saw them," Leo whispered.

Boris let the bridle of his horse fall, and

followed in a tumult of passion. Lubona sprang back toward the door, but he was too late. He could not get out. In the bright moonlight he saw the face of the man of whom he was resolved to get rid. He knew there was not one chance in a thousand of his getting away himself, but he would risk it, and he blazed away full at Boris' face.

He was inside, in the darkness, and if he had held his fire he might have slipped by and out of the door in another instant; but he forgot caution and all else in his anger. The flash of his revolver showed exactly where he stood, showed his face, too, only for the thousandth part of a second, but long enough for two people to recognize him.

Linda Lubona saw something else. She saw her father in the door, and knew that the life of the man she loved was forfeit. With a cry like that of some wild, savage thing, she sprang from the corner where she had crouched, full at Lubona. Could she have been a little earlier, she would have caught her father's bullet in her own body, and have given life

where she had already given youth and hope and happiness. But it was not to be. Leo, with certain, steady aim, fired straight at the heart of the man before him, and his bullet went as true as though he had been practising in a shooting gallery.

With a lurch, first backward and then forward, Lubona fell to the floor, with a shrieking, wailing creature lying on his breast, calling to him, begging him to arise, to open his eyes and to hear her say that if he would only live she would forgive him, that she had always loved him, that she would love him always.

Boris struck a match with trembling fingers, and held it up. Leo, looking drawn and miserable, leaned against the wall, his smoking pistol in his limp hand. Beverly stood close beside the bed from which Elinor Marr had arisen, and his arm was around her. It may have been the look in Boris' eyes that made her draw herself away, a fine flush creeping up into her cheeks. There are some things of which a woman is acutely conscious,

even when a man has been killed before her eyes.

Boris went over to the dead man, and tried to pull Linda away; but she clung to him, crying out that it was all her fault, that she had murdered her love. The king looked at her father, but Leo shook his head. He had intended to kill the man, but the sight of him lying there, his only brother's only child, and the sounds of his own child's grief, were too much for him. He went out again into the night.

Boris had found the oil lamp and lighted it, and it sent a feeble glimmer through the room. Elinor went to Linda and put her arms about her with a womanly pity which looked divine to the man who knew how the miserable little elfin creature had plotted against the American girl.

"Come away," Elinor said softly. "Come with me. You can do nothing."

Linda sprang at her like a fury.

"You! You! It is all your fault. It is you who killed him. He never would have

come here if it had not been for you. Why couldn't you stay in your own country?" Then she felt the strong, soft arms, the soothing touch of the beautiful creature who was born with the mother magnetism, and she let her take her away, out into the clear moonlight, from that ghastly sight on the floor.

Elinor did not say, "You are better off with him dead." She knew nothing except that here was a sore and miserable heart which she might comfort. She had no words, only her gentle loving touch. They sat down on the ruined wall where, as Linda had made Lubona think, Elinor had been sitting with a lover's arms around her. Two men came close, and listened. Linda was wailing, and they knew what the import must be.

Gregory turned to his companion.

"He is dead," he said. "No woman wails like that for any other cause. He is dead."

"What are we to do?"

"She seems to be in safe hands. Why should we risk belonging to a revolution?"

The Lubonas should have been seated on a throne long ago, but they never will now."

"Not now. There is no need for us to stay."

And like shadows they crept away to tell the rest of their comrades that the revolution was over, that there was no longer anybody to serve in intrigue and war, and that they might go back to their pig raising, and be ready to be called to a great family funeral at the castle.

Gregory stopped suddenly and spoke to his comrade.

"Wouldn't it be wise to let the old man who is in the castle loose?"

"Never fear but they will find him. We need not be too officious," the other said.

In two hours not a trace remained of Lubona's plot to get possession of Carpathia. It was a mushroom which had come up in a night and lasted but a day.

XIV.

"YOU appear to have been very well informed as to Miss Marr's whereabouts," Boris remarked. He leaned against the side of the hut, and watched Beverly's rapid investigation of Lubona's wound with something like curiosity.

"The man may not be dead," Beverly said excitedly. "This bullet wound is not exactly in the spot to kill instantly, unless it deflects. I can feel a flutter, I believe."

"Let him alone," Boris replied rudely. "He would probably prefer dying thus to being hanged presently. And hang him I certainly would. Why do you have so much curiosity concerning the dog's wounds?"

There was a note of suspicion in the king's voice which the American was not slow to hear. He sprang to his feet, and the two stood facing each other, looking full into each

other's eyes. Man to man, they knew that they were enemies.

"Perhaps," Boris' voice drawled out, "you have more reason to act a friendly part toward that assassin there than I have had cause to think." There was insult in every tone.

"I have the same reason for seeking his wound that I had in seeking yours a few hours ago—common humanity. Neither of you were anything to me."

"Perhaps you can explain," the king went on, "how Miss Marr and the horses happened to disappear, and how, a little later, you are found calmly sleeping at her feet, with Lubona and his cousin in the house."

"I have no explanations to make to you," Beverly said furiously. "None at all. Who are you that I should explain my actions to you?"

"I am the king of this country."

"Well, go and mount your toy throne," Beverly replied contemptuously. "Who the devil cares?"

It was not, perhaps, a sensible or dignified

remark, but after a man has patched up a king, and carried him about the country for a day or two, he loses some of his respect for a monarch's powers, particularly when the monarch is not a very wise one. They say that the people who were loyal to the Stuarts could dress up bonny Prince Charlie in the petticoats of a servant and hide him all day, and then bend the knee to him at night, but that isn't the sort of stuff of which young American newspaper men are made. Here was simply another young man, and one whom Beverly considered, and justly, to be ungrateful and impertinent; and he would treat him accordingly.

"This is no time to quarrel," Boris said.
"Miss Marr is to be considered."

"I can take care of Miss Marr now. I suppose you will come at once to the castle and release her father, and let him decide for her."

"I am not sure that that is the best plan. I will first go to Carpeth, to see that no trouble can come to a head there. Miss Marr will come with me, traveling under my protection."

"Miss Marr will doubtless decide what she will do," Beverly returned, but he knew that this was the thing she must do, the safe thing. He went to the door and looked out. Elinor still sat on the stone wall, with Linda in her arms. For an instant Beverly hesitated, and then he went toward her. She looked up into his face with something like timidity.

"Mr. Hardin," she said, "I am going to take this poor girl home with me, back to the castle. It ought to be her home. She was Count Lubona's wife. There is no longer any danger."

"I will not go there. I cannot go there. Do not take me!" Linda wailed. "I want my father."

"Can you find her father for her?" Elinor asked gently.

But that was not necessary. A haggard, miserable man sat near by. The fire of exultation which he had expected when this deed was done had not come. The pistol still hung in his hand, and it was not until he

heard his daughter cry out for him that he let it drop to the ground and went to her.

As Elinor saw the strong man take the slight, weak woman into his arms, she turned her face away. Tears fell over her lids and rolled down her cheeks. Tragedies like this she had never expected to see. They were stories out of a sphere of life which she, in her spotless youth and innocence, had never thought to know. Yet she understood Leo, as one strong nature understands another. He could kill, but he could comfort, and his wrath and vengeance were righteous.

Elinor rose to her feet and walked away, leaving father and child together, and Beverly followed her.

"Can I go home at once? Will you go with me? If my father has returned, he must be anxious." The other father and daughter had reminded her that stern as John Marr was, she was the apple of his eye.

"I do not believe your father has returned, Miss Marr, and it would hardly be wise for you to go back to the castle."

Beverly spoke in a hesitating fashion. He could not decide what was the best thing to do. He knew that were he the king, he would go to Carpeth and have a regiment of soldiers at the Lubona Castle by morning, to restore Elinor to her father; but he was learning that Boris had other ideas. He believed, indeed he knew, that Elinor would be safe under the protection of Boris, but he did not intend to trust to that. He intended to follow beside her. There was supposed to be an American representative in Carpeth, but Beverly had met him in Paris a few weeks ago, and the genial diplomat had boasted that he had never had time to look at his legation. Boris would take her to some place where there were women.

"He *shall* take her!" the American said to himself.

"I think the first thing to do is to have Count Lubona's body taken somewhere," Elinor said again. "It must not be left to lie there."


"We cannot have it taken away, or any

disturbance made, until the king is safe in Carpeth."

"Then some one must be left to watch it. It must not be that poor man and his daughter. They must go. Can you not go to some farm house and find some of his people? And"—she looked up at him—"how will you know when the king is safe in Carpeth? Where is he now?"

"The king?" Beverly looked at her stupidly. For the first time since Lubona was shot he realized that she did not know that Boris was the king. "Count Festin can tell you all about the king," he said. He would not betray the other man's secret. He was sailing under false colors himself, but they were colors he intended to take down as soon as possible. There was no reason for it now, except that in this crucial time he could not show himself to her as one who skulked behind another man's name. If Boris wanted to tell her, he was welcome to do so.

"But we must find some one to care for Count Lubona's body."



"I will see," Beverly said, but he did not leave her there alone. He took her to a point between the door and Leo, and left her sitting on a stone. Her hair was all unbound, and she looked like a glittering wraith.

Beverly stopped when he reached the door. Boris, King of Carpathia, was kneeling on the floor, going through the pockets of his dead foe. He looked up as the American entered, but went calmly on. He extracted a Russia leather book from a pocket so near the dead man's heart that it was stained with blood. He took Lubona's handkerchief from the breast of his coat and daintily cleaned the book before he opened it. The sight of his strong, jeweled fingers at this work made Beverly a little sick. Boris took the papers out one by one, and read them. They appeared to be of no consequence, and he laid them down. The dead man's eyes were staring up to the ceiling, unseeing. With an impulse he could not forego, Beverly went over and covered the face with his own handkerchief. At this action Boris gave a half smile.

"Squeamish, eh? I have no nerves over dead men, particularly over a scoundrel like this. Whew!" He had opened a paper which he had taken from an inner pocket. "Here is something which may interest you," he said, and held it out.

"I do not take advantage of a man who cannot protect his property," Beverly replied.

Boris laughed. "On second thought I will keep it," he said with gaiety. "It may be useful. Never despise trumps, however strong your hand. Shall we go now?"

"There is one thing I wish to speak of. Are you going to tell Miss Marr that you are the king?"

"And that you are a newspaper reporter who followed her father here to catch him at his tricks and queer his investments, eh? That all this fighting of yours is only part of a 'good story'? Do you want me to do that?"

"So far as I am concerned, I do not care what you do, or what you tell anybody. I wish, however, to know whether Miss Marr is to be taken into the secret of your royalty.

"I think I may carry the name of Count Festin a little longer," Boris told him.

Beverly stopped and said what he would rather have torn his tongue out than have voiced, but there was no alternative.

"I shall not betray your secret. I was your guest, and I acquiesced in the deception the dead man put upon us; but do you think it fair to a woman to keep her in ignorance of a rank which divides you from her as surely as the deepest social chasm? She is young; she has been much with you."

Boris stood up wonderingly. He had no conception of a love which might want to protect a woman from possible waste of affection in such a way. He knew what jealousy meant, but if Beverly had been filled with that vulgar passion he would have betrayed him. And then the American's words inspired a hope in him which he had not had before. Could he, as Count Festin, win her heart? Boris was not made of the stuff of moral heroes. This girl, with her life, her strength, her purity and beauty and innocence,

made his soul kneel to her, but it awakened in him emotions which he had inherited from half savage ancestors, men who had stolen their wives, and from the lawless blood in his mother's veins.

"I will be Count Festin until my throne is reached once more."

"What are your plans?"

"I want to go at once. Miss Marr's horse is near by. She can ride with me to Carpeth."

"Are you not afraid that Lubona's men will follow and avenge him?"

For answer, Boris pointed outside. "Leo would soon stop that. He is the head of the house. He killed the fellow. There is danger, however, and it is for that reason that I wish to get away as speedily as possible. I will take Leo with Miss Marr and myself."

"Do you know anything of this country, or of Lubona's people? What is to be done about his body?"

"Leo will know."

"It is a good deal to ask of a man—to kill your enemies and then bury them."

"You might stay here until we can send somebody back from Carpeth."

Beverly's face became a shade sterner, and his mouth set.

"I shall not leave Miss Marr until I see her safe with some woman," he declared. "She asked me not to leave her until she was in a place of safety."

"Her wishes shall certainly be respected." Then the king did something which only the rage which was in his heart, his hatred of his rival, and the fever of his illness could make possible in a man whose possibilities were as good as his. He turned to Beverly with a black sneer in his eyes—those bold black eyes with the white lights—and with his young face haggard and transformed. "She must have some good reason for considering you a judge of a place of safety. You appeared to have found one for her here. Do you expect to hold her hair while she sleeps?"

Beverly made one stride across the room, and caught the king by the throat.

"You——" he choked. They swayed noise-

lessly, moving along back and forth. The people from the outside could not see them now. Beverly pushed the king through the door of the little room, and flung him violently upon the couch where Elinor had lain; and then he took his fingers from his throat.

"You slandering barbarian!" he said, but the words fell upon deaf ears. Beverly realized that he had struck a man whose strength was merely fictitious. Boris was unconscious.

Running back into the room, he lifted Lubona's body in his powerful arms, laid it gently on one side of the room, and threw the blanket over it. Then he went outside to Leo.

"The king is ill," he said. "Will you attend to him? I will ride to Carpeth for a physician, and for his guard."

As he spoke, and while he was on his way to the horses, Beverly saw Elinor start up and run into the house to succor the man who had just insulted her. At the thought of the turmoil of the country, of all that rested upon

Boris' recovery, he lashed his willing horse and tore recklessly down over the rocky slope toward the road to Carpath.

When he reached the capital morning was breaking. He sprang from his horse at the inn where he had taken a room, and gave the reins into the hands of one of the crop haired boys in aprons who stood waiting.

It took him an hour or two to get to his majesty's physician, and to have him understand that an ambulance must be taken out to the house of Leo Lubona with an escort of soldiers. There had been a hunting party, an accident, the king was slightly hurt, and the king's chamberlain had been killed. Miss Marr, an American lady, would hardly care to go back to the castle of the Lubonas until after the funeral, and Beverly wondered haltingly if the physician's wife could not make her comfortable until after her father's return.

The physician's wife, a buxom, curious lady, would be delighted to entertain the great heiress. But when the house of Leo was reached, Beverly found that Elinor would not

consent to leave Linda. She would stay there until after the funeral of Lubona, and then she would go home. Beverly could find no fault with her decision, but there was one thought in his mind which seemed to be a reflex of a trouble of her own, and in another instant she voiced it.

"Mr. Hardin," she said, "I am anxious about my father. Where is he?"

"I am sure he is quite safe, and that you may see him within a few hours. Indeed, I am going to look for him now. Lubona's revolution is over."

They were carrying the body of the dead man out.

"Where are they taking him?" Beverly asked.

"It seems that the king has heard, and has ordered that he be taken to his old home, if my father consents, for the funeral. As my father was not to be found I gave my own orders."

An officer approached and saluted, not Beverly, but Miss Marr, and delivered a message.

He, too, had evidently been instructed in his majesty's incognito.

"The Count Festin presents his compliments to Miss Marr, and asks the honor of bidding her farewell."

"I must go," she said. "It was so kind of you to take all of this trouble. Will you take a little more? Will you seek out those servants of Lubona—Linda thinks they are about the hut on the hillside—and tell them of his death? She wants to warn them to escape before they are arrested and punished. There is no one else to trust."

"I will go," he said.

But he found no one. There were marks of a camp, but although he searched wearily through the wood, not a sign of the force of the day before remained. They had scattered like a column of dust.

It was dusk when the castle of Lubona found Beverly standing before its gates. He could see that the lower rooms were illuminated, and hanging over the ivy grown doorway was a mourning hatchment. He looked

up to the tower where Linda had told him that Marr was confined, but here was darkness.

"Of course he has gone," he said ; but he could not sleep until he had assured himself. He dropped down from his horse, his legs so stiff that they seemed like sticks of wood, and found one of the king's guard before him.

"Have you an order to pass, sir?" the man asked respectfully.

"No. I come on business for Miss Marr."

"I will call the lieutenant," he said, and sent for the officer in charge.

"We have sent away Miss Marr's belongings with her maid," the officer said. "Count Lubona's body lies here in state, and we have orders from the king that no one shall pass."

"Has Mr. Marr been here?"

"I have not seen anything of him," the man said, but Beverly knew that he was lying.

There was nothing more to be done. Wearily he made his way up the hillside and threw himself down in the byre of the pig herder in a sleep of utter exhaustion and fatigue of body and mind.

XV.

TWICE every day, in the next three days, Beverly made an effort to see the king ; but Boris was said to be recovering from his injuries, and could see no one. Beverly haunted the palace. He could not go back to Elinor Marr until he had something definite to tell her concerning her father.

Lubona's funeral came three days after his body had been taken to his old home, and it was made as great as the funeral of a king's chamberlain should be. The king himself attended in person. To Beverly's astonishment, Leo Lubona was also there in the capacity of chief mourner. Resplendent in his showiest uniform, Boris laid a wreath on the coffin where the keen, sarcastic face of the dead Lubona seemed to smile at the mockery of respect and affection.

After the body had been ceremoniously

placed in the vault of the estate, Beverly lost sight of Boris. Once, during the services, he had tried to make his way through one of the halls and had been stopped, silently, unostentatiously, by a guard. He did not leave the house with the body, but remained behind. As he wandered about, a young officer whom he had seen in the king's household came up to him.

"Mr. Beverly," he said, "is there anything I can do for you?"

"Yes. Get me an audience with the king."

The young man pulled his long mustache thoughtfully.

"Pardon me," he said, "I do not wish to be impertinent, but have you not offended his majesty? I thought——"

"I may have done so," Beverly said, "but I wish very much to see him. Can you make some arrangement by which it will be possible?"

"I can try. He comes here to rest for an hour before he goes back to Carpath. He is still weak from his hurt. It may be possible

that you can see him. I will take the risk of asking you to stay until then. Come in here." He opened the door of a little ante-chamber which led from the drawing room, and Beverly sat down to wait. The young officer smiled. "It might be well for both of us," he said, "if you left the door ajar. If the king refuses to see you, there is no necessity of your appearing again. It is a good leap to the ground outside. It might save some complications if you disappeared. I will ask him in here. His hurt appears to have upset his temper to some degree. He has not been himself since his return to Carpeth."

It was but a few minutes before sounds in the next room told Beverly that the king had arrived.

"Pull out that couch," a strong voice ordered. "Bring me a carafe of water and some brandy, and leave me alone for ten minutes."

"Your majesty——" the young officer began.

"Hush!" Boris said in a peremptory fashion. "Do not disturb me. I wish to be left alone."

The servant set the brandy and water beside him. Once again the officer tried to speak, and once again he was repulsed. With a sigh which was meant to convey failure to Beverly, he backed out of the room. In an instant the American had opened the door between the two apartments, and stood before the king. Another man might have sprung up with an exclamation, but this one did not. He lay back on his pillows, and the glass of brandy in his hand did not show a tremor. To Beverly he looked half a dozen years older than six days before; but that may have been due, in some measure, to the heavy, gaudy uniform.

He looked at Beverly for an instant, without a word, and for the first time that young man felt the force of the kingly office. As he stood before Boris, hate himself for it as he might, he recognized the other's superior rank, that "divinity" that tradition has made to "hedge a king." This was not the reck-

less, loose tongued boy of those nights, but the man for whom he had killed other men. But Boris let the iron of his face degenerate into a sneer.

"May I ask to what I owe the honor of this visit?" he said. "I might have known that bars and bolts, guards and doors, would not hold you."

"Your majesty is kind to remind me of my poor services," Beverly replied, despising himself for the words. "I had a debt to you, but you chose to take the payment yourself." Involuntarily he looked at the throat of the king, where a lace cravat, tucked inside his high uniform collar, hid some black marks. The American had strong fingers. "I have come to ask you what you have done with my countryman, John Marr."

A cruel light came into the king's eyes, and animation into the lines of his face. Evidently he had looked for this, and it was not displeasing to him.

"Mr. Beverly," he said, "I am the king of this country. Had my patience been less,

you might find yourself a target outside the walls of Carpeth. As it is, you have been my companion through sundry dangers. For that I am grateful. And I will do you the honor, and myself the justice, to tell you my plans. Mr. Marr shall be released, for I intend to make his daughter my wife."

"You cannot! You are a king," Beverly said quickly.

"My mother was the wife of a prince."

"You would not——"

"Pray consider the memory of my mother, who was as good a woman as yours. I do not care to have a newspaper reporter meddling in my affairs. I beg, Mr. Beverly, that you will find it convenient to leave Carpathia within the next twenty four hours."

XVI.

BEVERLY did not leave the room by the window, as the young officer had suggested. He was determined not to quit the castle without having said one word to John Marr. Linda had said that the prisoner was in the tower, and it was probable that he was still there.

In the doorway he came up against the officer who let him in. A wide smile went over the good natured face.

"So you didn't need to climb out of the window?"

"The king has more politeness than to require gymnastics for his amusement," the American returned lightly. Then he went on with a graver face. "When a man has a mission, he has a right to use such means as sees fit. Is not that one of the laws of diplomacy?"

"I am no diplomat," the other disclaimed, though he smiled happily.

"I have a secret mission." Beverly's voice went low. "I am to see and make a proposition to the prisoner who is held here. As he is my countryman, it will be easier for me than for another. It is best that I should reach him in such a way that he will have no inkling that I come from the king. I must appear to every one, even if I am discovered, to have been acting upon my own responsibility. I give you my confidence because but for you I should not be going upon this mission, and I know I can trust you."

The Carpathian looked hard into Beverly's eyes. He was not unduly suspicious, but he was a Carpathian. It appeared the most natural thing in the world that Boris should want his prisoner put into the position of betraying himself. That again was an old Carpathian trick. He mused for a moment, his lips drawn almost together, while the heart of the American beat fast and he kept an eye on the doorway. Once there was a

disturbance inside, and it seemed to Beverly that his heart would never slip down out of his throat again. Boris might appear at any moment.

"There is a way of access to the tower. Doors have been sealed up which led to it from other parts of the house. There is only one entrance, and that is guarded."

"But the windows?"

"A coping about eight inches wide runs around the tower. You have noticed it."

"Eight inches! It is a roadway. Suppose you show me the way, arousing no suspicions."

"You Americans are venturesome," the Carpathian said. "Come with me, and I will pretend to show you out of the front door."

They arose and walked together down the hall. Two men stood there idly, but Beverly knew them to be guards. They saluted the young officer profoundly, and one of them held open the door.

The Carpathian took the door in his hand, and began to talk, as if continuing a conversation with Beverly.

1

"I hope I shall see you in Paris next year. I want to get a leave then. By the way, Olaf"—to one of the men—"go up to the room above and bring a package you will see on the dressing table."

The guard went, while the two young men talked on.

"I will walk with you," the Carpathian said, "as far as the bridge;" and then he turned to the other man. "Get my cape. It is in the hall."

"I will walk on," Beverly called out, and passed through the door; but as the servant's back was turned, he followed the Carpathian's gesture and ran swiftly up the stairs. The young officer took his cape and the package, and walked out. Ten minutes later he passed in through the stables and joined Beverly where he stood behind a stack of arms in the upper hallway.

"Come this way," he whispered, and led him to a door in the wall and up a short stairway. In another minute they came to a casement which led out upon a tiled roof. The

Carpathian stopped. "Out here," he said, "you will find your way along the roof until you come to the place where you can climb the side of the tower. There is ivy. Quick!"

The evening was cold, but Beverly took off his shoes. He pulled himself up by the ivy, and by crevices in the stones, until he stood upon the narrow ledge, fully fifteen feet above the lower roof. Then he realized that he did not know which of the tower windows led into Marr's room. And how was he going to get in if he reached the right window? It was hardly likely that a strong, agile man like John Marr would sit beside an open window and pine for freedom with a ledge eight inches wide running underneath. But as the darkness grew Beverly put his hands in the ivy and slipped cautiously along.

The first window was dark, and there seemed to be neither shutters nor bars to it. He stood still and listened. It seemed to him that he could have heard a breath, but there was only dead silence. The next window was around the corner, and as Beverly turned he

saw it was lighted. He heard voices, too—deep, earnest voices; and involuntarily he shrank back into the ivy and listened.

There was no doubt about John Marr being here. His strident, sarcastic voice was seemingly as strong as ever, and it was pitched high with temper.

"Release me from this place, and let me meet you on fair terms, and I will answer you. Do you expect to discuss any matter while I am in this condition?"

"I cannot forget," Boris said with some degree of patience, "that you were free, and that you tried to lure me into a camp of insurgents."

"Lure? You asked to go." Evidently the fear of kings did not rest in the soul of John Marr. "It might be better for you that Russia should own Carpathia. You have no real ties here. You are tired of the whole affair. If you aren't, you are fonder of the desert than I imagine."

"Suppose I give up my throne. Suppose I join with you, and let your plans go through. What then?"

"You will have done a very sensible thing."

"Will you give me your daughter?"

"That I will not!" the old man almost yelled. "Do you suppose I have spent my life earning money for you to waste? You! A fortune hunter, an adventurer with a paper crown! Faugh! Why don't you strike me, to prove to me what a good husband you would make for her?"

"For fear I might be tempted to strike you were you free, I will leave you bound," Boris said, and Beverly could hear that the words came through gritted teeth.

A moment later the door clanged, and Marr was alone. A second later Beverly heard the sound of one hard, dry sob. He waited for a moment, for the sound chilled him. Then he came close to the window sill, and taking a firm hold, peered in. Marr, who was sitting in a wooden chair, was secured by an ingenious arrangement which, he reflected, had doubtless been planned for the king himself by Lubona. From each of the prisoner's ankles ran a slender steel chain, attached to a

staple in the wall, and so arranged that while he could almost reach the wall and the window, he could not quite do so. Where one chain was lax, the other held him tight. There was no possible chance of his getting near enough to the staples to work at them, or near enough to the window to attract attention. The fire, too, was just out of reach.

Beverly waited until the place was absolutely still, and the old man sat with his head in his hands. Then he carefully lifted one leg over the window sill, and jumped to the floor. He had expected to see some signs of relief on Marr's face, but if there was any change it grew grimmer.

"What do *you* want?" the prisoner asked harshly.

"I came to tell you that your daughter is well——"

"A piece of information already received from your master."

"It is my wish to restore you to her. I am here without the knowledge of the king, and tell you that there may be a way of escape,

and to plan with you. Boris has ordered me to leave the kingdom."

"A very pretty story, indeed. You forget that I last saw you with the king. Your entrance is admirably planned. I may be supposed to be ready to listen to you after the interview I have just had with the young adventurer who calls himself the king of this country." Marr laughed again. "Doubtless he would like to get me out of here without coming down from his lofty perch. You may tell him for me that I am not going."

"But your daughter?"

"She is an American girl, and if she can't take care of herself, this is an excellent opportunity for her to learn."

Beverly's patience gave out. He went to the fireplace, picked up a heavy iron rod which lay there, and went toward one of the staples. Under his strong pressure it was the work of only a few minutes to prize it out. In a short time Marr was free, except that he held the chains in his hands, still attached to his ankles.

"Put those in your pockets. You are a strong, agile man; come with me. We can slip along this wall, drop to the ground by holding to the ivy, and get away." Beverly spoke with strong excitement.

But Marr hesitated.

"Why are you so anxious to help me, if it is not a plot to put me again into the hands of that fellow Boris—to let him kill me, perhaps?"

"Because I, too, love your daughter."

"You! And you expect me to give her to you for helping me out of this place? Understand that I will do nothing of that sort. Rather than have her marry you, I would give her to that adventurer. After all, he is a prince, and most girls are pleased with a title. I should get all my concessions."

"I ask for nothing," Beverly said. "I want nothing but to relieve your daughter's mind, to take you back to her. There is only the slenderest chance that I shall be allowed to come near her again. I am ordered out of the country. I cannot go with the knowledge that you have left your daughter

alone at the mercy of——” Beverly broke off because there was a lump in his throat. He was helpless, indeed.

“You can have no interest in me or my daughter. I should have known from the beginning that you were here only to work disaster for me.”

“I may have come to Carpathia for that purpose,” Beverly said, “but I swear to you that I gave it up long ago. If the story is ever told it will be told by some other pen.”

Marr looked at him curiously.

“You *were* here, then, to work disaster for me. You are your father’s own son. And you think that it can all be wiped out in a moment by taking me out of this place.”

“I do not see what my father has to do with it.”

“Your father ruined the work of my life. He drove me from America.”

A light suddenly fell upon Beverly.

“Oh!” he cried, “you think I am Hardin. My name is Beverly. I was sent here by the New York *Herald* to see what you were up

to. I happened to be wearing Hardin's cap. I see how you made the mistake."

He had not finished his words before Marr was on his feet, and Beverly had another example of the singular combination of qualities that went to make up this financier.

"Why didn't you tell me this some time ago? Young man, you have a great deal to learn in practical journalism. I thought you were the son of that old devil Hardin, and I spent valuable time trying to put you into such a tight box that you would be a disgrace to his name. As I haven't had my revenge on him, I'm very glad you escaped it. But it's nonsense to say that you will never tell the story. There is no pen so well calculated to tell it. Ah!" Marr's eyes narrowed, and a smile took the corners of his old mouth. "I am not sure that between us we cannot bring the king to terms at last. We ought to. We can make a pretty story of his persecution of American citizens. We can ask for enough money to put us on our feet for life." He spoke as if he, too, were a poor man.

"We are not out yet," Beverly replied. "There are no facilities for telling a newspaper story to the world from this tower, and unless we get away before the moon comes up we shall probably be picked off and buried like Lubona, with honors, and the world will hear nothing whatever of our side of the story."

Marr was looking at the ledge, and at the ground below. Then he shuddered and drew back.

"I cannot do it," he said. "I am no coward, but the sight of that ledge and the fall below turns me sick and dizzy. I cannot go."

"Tell me where your men are. I will get away and bring them here."

Marr looked at him with suspicion.

"I have no men. My miners are scattered. I know of no armed body."

Beverly went over and tried the door. The lock was massive, but he could see that the key was in it on the outside.

"Wait here," he said. "Stay by the door."

He went back to the window, pulled him-

self out to the ledge by the ivy branches, and moved swiftly along until he came to that dark window just around the corner. Then he vaulted in. Standing quite still, he struck a match and looked around. It was, as he had supposed, a lumber room. Here were piled all the trash that an ancient family can accumulate in centuries—old moth eaten garments, wormy furniture, and dust, dust, dust. Beverly looked for the door and went to it. It was unlocked. Softly, softly, he opened it an inch or two and looked out.

Facing him was the door behind which he knew Marr must be standing. The light was dim, but he could see that the key was in the lock, and at the other end of the passage he could see the guards playing cards around an oil lamp. If he moved they would be likely to hear him on the creaking old floor and turn. He went back into the room and struck another match, and then he hastily gathered together all the inflammable material in sight, feeling for it, striking match after match, and carefully building a fire.

In five minutes he had a crackling, roaring flame. He opened the door, and the red fire darted after him, swept by the draft from the window. He lifted his voice in a mighty yell, whose meaning any nation can interpret: "Fire! Fire!"

With one bound he turned the key of the room where John Marr stood, and pulled him into the passage. Together they rushed upon the guards, who had started up in a panic. Before they knew what had happened, the two fugitives were on the stairs, past the turn, and in the lighted part of the building. Beverly opened the first door he came to and pushed Marr in, as the whole household rushed up the tower stairs, looking for the fire. He saw Boris fly by, consternation in his face, and then, although there were a dozen men in the passageway, he opened the door and stepped boldly out.

The two Americans went quickly down the steps into the hall below. Beverly reasoned that Marr's face was not known to more than two or three of the men, and they would

never dare stop him, when he was accompanied by the king's friend, without the king's orders.

The main hall was empty, and Beverly made an instant decision. If they fled on foot, morning would be certain to discover them. They must get to Carpath. Quick as a flash Beverly had the chest back from the tapestry door, had pulled Marr through it, and was running toward the stables, praying that there might be horses there.

The older man was as active as the younger, and followed him without a word or a sound. The door into the stable was easily opened. Beverly gave an exclamation which came from his heart as he looked within. Standing in the stalls were two horses, and only two, saddled and bridled. Evidently the king intended to ride away within a short time. The call of fire had drawn off the stable men, and as fast as he could move Beverly opened the door into the alley way, and he and Marr, mounting, rode out into the night.

XVII.

BEVERLY turned in his saddle and looked back, feeling like a criminal, for the ancestral castle of the Lubonas was wrapped in flames. But they crossed the bridge, finding it quite unguarded, and were going toward Carpeth along the road that led under the mountains where they had played at hide and seek with Lubona. Up there, not so very far as the crow flies, Elinor had sat on that ruined wall where he had held her in his arms. A sharp little thrill went through Beverly's heart as he wondered whether she, too, remembered.

He was brought back to earth by a jerk. Marr was leaving the road and going up one of these ravines. Beverly drew in his own horse and rode after him.

"Where are you going?"

"I have business in this direction."

"If you want to go to your daughter, this is not the way. It is the next turning."

Marr stopped suddenly, and half turned his horse until he faced Beverly.

"I am going to the men who were to strike the first blow for the downfall of Boris' throne. You are exactly the fellow I want. You can put the sympathies of the world with us. Boris will follow us, but he has only a small guard, and he will take the straight road to Carpath. He can be overpowered. This country is always ripe for revolution. It is in a state of yeast now. Come with me."

"No!"

"You told me back there that you loved my daughter, and yet you refuse to give yourself the opportunity——" Marr broke off suddenly.

Beverly's head went down on his chest, and then was lifted again.

"Where are your men? They have long left the ravine where you expected to find them. I myself saw them go."

"They are all about. I can gather them

when I will. Some of them are in Boris' own forces. I want to select a spot, and send out a message. I am frank with you, for I believe you will not betray me to the king."

"I swear to you that I will never betray you to the king!" At the vehemence with which he said it, a nicer ear than Marr's might have hesitated. Men like Beverly are not in the habit of taking oaths unnecessarily. "But there is but one safe thing for you to do—go to Carpath, and from there out of the country."

"That I will not do."

Beverly was learning to think quickly. He remembered the French diplomat who concealed an important letter by ostentatiously displaying it on his mantelpiece. Boris would never think of looking for them in the hut.

"I know exactly the place you want." Beverly was making no promises, but evidently Marr concluded that his last argument had been decisive. "There is a herder's hut on the hillside where the son of the woman

who keeps the farm below, whom your men know, generally sleeps. We will go there. The boy can be sent away on a message."

"I intended to go to this woman's house."

"Boris has seen your men there."

"Come on, then."

Beverly had not expected to find the boy there, but the lad lay in the bunk in the corner, sleeping as calmly as if a king, and a man who had hoped to be a king, had not occupied it since he had been routed out of it a few days earlier. Marr sat down by the fireplace, and, taking a piece of paper from his pocket, wrote a line on it, and bade the lad carry it to his mother.

"You have carried food before," he said sternly. "See that you tell no one."

"Let me tell him to hasten," Beverly said, and he followed the boy out of the hut. He had awakened grumblingly, and was muttering over the fools who would not let a man sleep, when Beverly put something into his hand which made his palm itch. It was a gold piece.

"Give me that note," Beverly whispered, "and go at once to the house of Father Leo, carrying him this instead. Let no one see you, and you shall have another——"

Beverly did not finish this sentence, but reeled under a powerful blow, and turned to grapple with John Marr.

"You traitor, you scoundrel!" the old man fairly hissed. "Would you betray me? I will kill you!"

He had the steel chain in his hand, and was dealing Beverly powerful strokes about the head. But the journalist was the younger and stronger. He wrenched the chain from Marr's hands, gave it a powerful throw over the old man's shoulder, and it wrapped itself, lasso-like, around the one solid thing in the room—the iron crane in the fireplace, put there to support the pig scalding kettles of the farmer. Then Beverly sprang back a step, and before Marr knew that he was caught, the tightening chain tripped him and brought him to the floor.

Beverly held Marr's arms while he took the

other chain and gave it a turn about his vanquished antagonist's legs. "I beg your pardon," the young man said, "but there is nothing else to do. I cannot and I will not let you ruin yourself. Your men are scattered. You know yourself that if you are caught you must make terms with Boris. You defied him, but had you not been protected by your daughter, and by his love for her, you would never be embarking upon this reckless project now. I have sent for Miss Marr. She shall decide whether she will be the morganatic wife of a third rate king, in order to further schemes which you cannot carry through by any other means."

But as he looked at the bound man, Beverly's heart was heavy. It was not likely that any girl would look kindly at one who had treated her father in such an ignominious fashion as this. The old man lay on the floor, his hair disheveled, cursing himself for a fool in trusting a liar.

"I told you no lies. I promised not to betray you to the king. I have betrayed you

to nobody. Your daughter has every right to see you, to plead with you, to take you away. I give you into her hands. She, and she alone, can save you. The king, seeing you with her, will give her all she asks."

It was a long and lonely vigil, and the late waning moon was lighting the rocks as on that other night, when at last Beverly heard voices and the scramble of horses' feet. He wanted to say a word to Elinor before she saw her father. He must make some sort of an explanation, and he would do it as delicately as he could. There was no water in the hut, and his brandy flask was empty, so that the blood and the marks of the blows of the chains were still on his face, but he had forgotten that. His heart was in his throat and his hands trembled.

The moonlight struck him full as he came out of the door, and he saw a picture before him which printed itself on his brain. He never forgot the slightest detail of it, for it seemed to kill all hope. Elinor Marr was slipping down from her horse, with Boris,

King of Carpathia, holding out his arms to help her to the ground.

But in another minute she had seen Beverly, and with a bound her hands were on his arms, her face looking up to his, her beautiful eyes full of unshed tears, her lips drawn down with anxiety.

"Oh, you are not killed, but you are hurt, you are hurt!"

She gave way to the emotion which up to that moment he had felt; but at the sight of her face, at the blessed knowledge of what he saw there, he was strong. He saw in her eyes the love that would make her put away father and mother. With a heave the world turned over, and he was right with it again.

Beverly put his arms around her shoulders. There was no need to say anything now of their relations to each other. He had said it that night on the old wall, and tonight she had answered him.

"Elinor," he said at last, "you must be calm. Be yourself for a moment." He put his hand under her chin and kissed her solemnly

on the lips. "Are you alone? How came Boris here?"

"Do you mean Count Festin? Where is he?" She looked around.

"Are you alone?"

"Yes. When your note came, Father Leo had gone away. He saw that the old castle was on fire, and he and Linda both ran. I did not read the note, but the boy said that a man was here killing you. I got a revolver and a horse and came."

"Through that wood alone?"

"Yes. I would have come through fire! Had you not done more for me? On the way I met Count Festin and some men. I told him. He turned, as I knew he would, and rode back with me. His men are coming behind. Where is the man who hurt you?"

"Elinor," Beverly began, and then he stopped. How could he explain it all quickly enough? How could he ask her to plead with Boris?

"Why do you hesitate? What is it?" she asked anxiously.

"Miss Marr, he is trying to tell you that your father is inside, waiting to see you. He brought him here. He finds it hard to tell all of his deeds of heroism at once," Boris' cool voice said behind them.

"My father!" she said. "I knew you would find him."

She gave Beverly another grateful look and rushed away. Beverly caught at her, and would have spoken, but she was gone. He turned and faced Boris' cynical, smiling face with hate enough in his heart to have killed the man where he stood.

"If you had a thousand devils of fathers in there, you could not take her away from me now. She will believe me!"

"I found that out tonight when she thought you were killed, or hurt, and called upon me to revenge you, to save you. She is the sweetest woman that ever lived, but she cares only for you. I have behaved like a cad—like these barbarians. I have been in the wilderness too long. I have lost my manners."

"And you have sent the sweetest woman

in the world in there without an explanation, to have her feelings hurt, to be humiliated?"

"I have just made the explanation to her father. I took the liberty of relieving him of his chains. I had the key to those anklets of his in my pocket. I set him on his feet, and we came to terms. He is to hold his tongue concerning his grievances, and I will hold mine. You may be trusted not to print your side of the story. I fear you will entirely lose your reputation with your newspaper."

Boris had drawn on his riding gloves, and was preparing to go, when Elinor came out. He smiled at her.

"Are you going?" she said.

"Yes. My men will be here in a moment. I hear them now. I must go on. I will leave two or three to escort you to Carpeth." He hesitated again. "I hope you will be happy."

Elinor looked at him fondly. To her, he was like a sweet, big brother.

"I am sorry you must go, but I suppose it is on the king's business."

"Yes," he said, "on the king's business."

They watched him ride on to meet the coming men, give orders to some to stay, and then disappear in the dark wood. Elinor put her arm in Beverly's, and smiled at him.

"Let us go and see father. He wants to talk to you about going home."

Half way to the door, as they were walking together like two children, he stopped.

"Do you know," he said, "you never call me by my right name. It isn't Hardin, it is Beverly. I am the newspaper man whom Count Lubona——"

"Don't speak of that man. What do I care what your profession is? I don't care whether you have any name or not. I know *you!*"

And there was only one answer to that; but he thanked her father for having told her. And with no more battles to fight, no more explanations to make, they went inside the hut.

THE END.



1

0.

1

1

